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ABSTRACT

This book is designed to enable school administrators to actively participate in planning and implementing school safety and public relations activities. It provides a conceptual framework of the public relations process and shows its practical application to the problems of school crime and student misbehavior, through discussion of school public relations practices, school safety issues, and specific public relations strategies and tactics to promote safe schools. Chapter 1, "Engineering Consent," is a newly revised version of Edward L. Bernays' 1947 eight-point plan for developing a successful public relations program. Chapter 2, "School Public Relations," stresses reasons for building public confidence in schools and offers guidelines for developing a crisis communication plan and for working with the media. Chapter 3, "School Safety and Public Opinion," presents an overview of school safety concerns and the role of public relations in achieving quality education. Chapter 4, "101 School Safety Ideas," offers strategies based on current research conducted by the National School Safety Center (NCSS). Appendix A contains a 10-page reproduction of the 1986 "Principals of Leadership" series, a print media public service advertising campaign. Appendix B, a resource section, lists associations, government agencies and publications relating to education, public relations and school safety. (IW)

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EDUCATED PUBLIC RELATIONS

SCHOOL SAFETY 101

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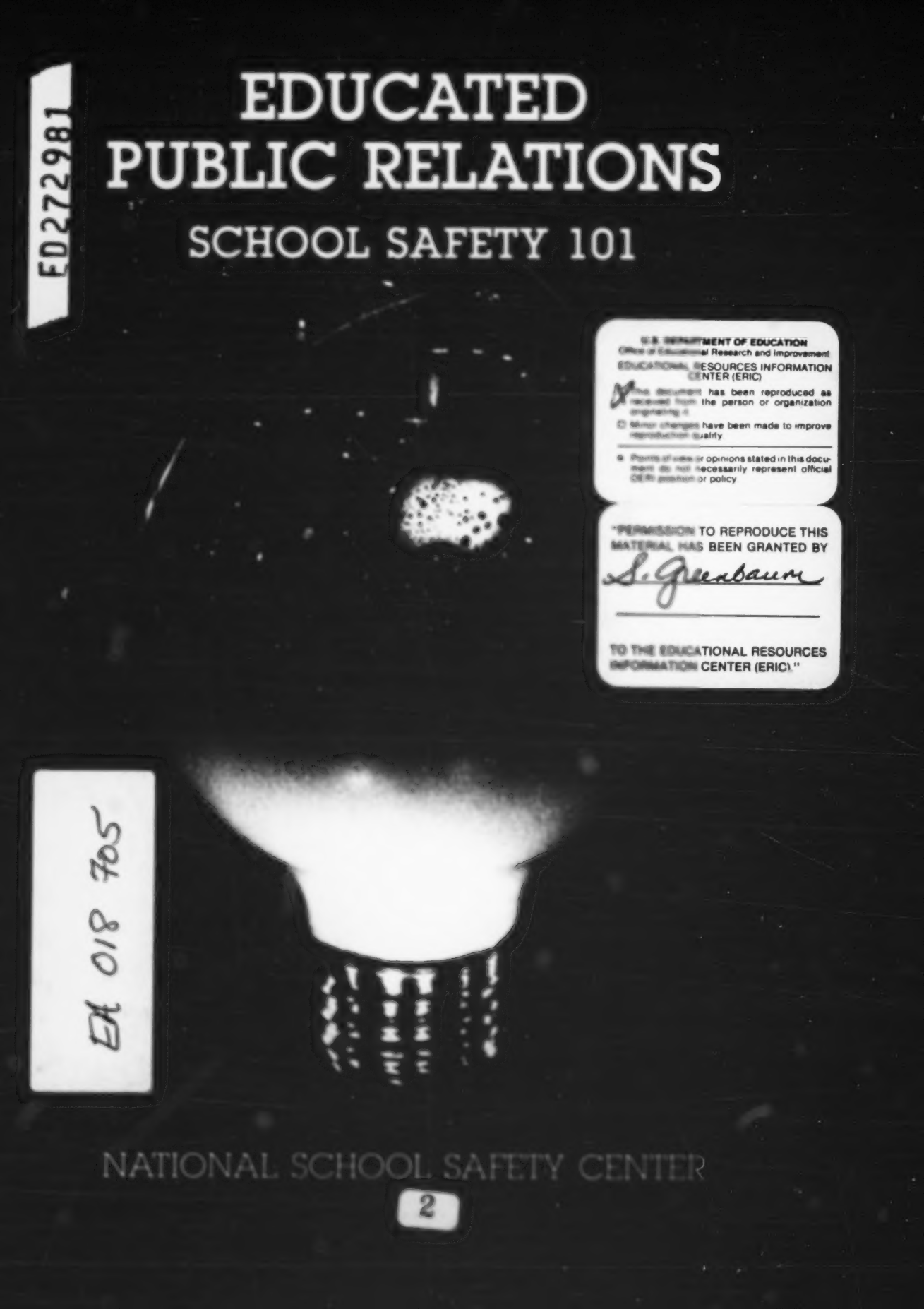

EA 018 705

NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER

EDUCATED PUBLIC RELATIONS:
SCHOOL SAFETY 101

BY
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WITH
ENGINEERING CONSENT
BY
Edward L. Bernays

September 1986

NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER

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Introduction

Educated Public Relations: School Safety 101 is designed to help school district and site administrators provide the highest quality education by ensuring their campuses are safe and secure. This book provides a conceptual framework of the public relations process and shows its practical application to the problems of school crime and student misbehavior.

School district public relations directors, or school administrators whose responsibilities include public relations, are the primary audience. It is critical, however, that other district representatives and school principals actively participate in planning and implementing all school safety and public relations activities. Elementary, middle and senior high schools will benefit most from this information, although much of it also is relevant to colleges and universities.

This book systematically leads practitioners through the public relations planning process, school public relations practices, school safety issues, and specific public relations strategies and tactics to promote safe schools that provide quality education.

Chapter I, "Engineering consent," is a newly revised version of an original 1947 treatise by Edward L. Bernays. This classic eight-point plan chronologically outlines the steps to developing a successful public relations program.

Most accepted public relations theory has been either created, tested or documented by Bernays, who, during his seven decades in the profession, has served as an advisor to many influential and accomplished individuals, including Presidents Roosevelt, Hoover and Eisenhower, Thomas Edison, Grace Kelly, Enrico Caruso and Henry Ford. A prolific writer, Bernays has authored *Crystallizing Public Relations, The Engineering of Consent* and *Public Relations,* books which provide the foundation for the principles and practices of the public relations profession throughout the world.

Chapter II focuses on school public relations. This section stresses the reasons for building public confidence in schools and includes insights from experienced school public relations professionals. Guidelines for developing a crisis communica-

tion plan and for working with media also are included.

Chapter III offers an overview of school safety concerns and, using existing programs as examples, suggests the role public relations can play in promoting and achieving quality education.

Chapter IV outlines *101* specific school safety ideas to use when working with school board members, school employees, students, parents, community residents, service groups, business leaders, government representatives, law enforcers and media representatives. These 101 strategies and tactics are based primarily on current research conducted by the National School Safety Center (NSSC). Publications of the National School Public Relations Association provided additional ideas. Each activity promotes school safety directly or indirectly by contributing to a positive school climate. The ideas listed are examples of what works. Readers can build on them, modify them to suit their needs or replicate them when applicable.

Also included is the 1986 "Principals of Leadership" series, *Appendix A*, reproduced in whole. The message consistently communicated by the ten school leaders featured in these public service announcements is that for schools to be effective, they must be safe. Their leadership and public relations skills demonstrate the objectives of *Educated Public Relations: School Safety 101.*

An important concept stressed throughout the book is the need to develop partnerships between individuals and institutions concerned about education and safety.

The resource section, *Appendix B*, includes associations, government agencies and publications relating to education, public relations and school safety.

An important concept stressed throughout the book is the need to develop partnerships between individuals and institutions concerned about education and safety. This collaborative philosophy also provided the impetus for the U.S. Department of Justice, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education and Pepperdine University, to create NSSC.

The Center's mandate is to bring national attention and promote cooperative solutions to problems which disrupt the educational process, including school crime and violence, poor discipline, low attendance and high dropout rates, and drug traffic and abuse. To achieve its objectives, NSSC offers technical assistance, publications, films and training sessions. The Center's practitioner-oriented activities are complemented by a comprehensive public relations program, using public information literature, research and clearinghouse activities, media relations and multimedia public service advertising.

The National School Safety Center by publishing *Educated Public Relations: School Safety 101* encourages educators to acknowledge school crime and student misbehavior do exist. At the same time, this book offers a wide range of practical and positive suggestions to ensure safety, quality education and public confidence in all our nation's schools.

CHAPTER I

Engineering consent

By Edward L. Bernays

Democracy has been defined as government by the consent of the governed. But today our society is so complex that it is not government alone that needs the public's consent. Every group and, for that matter, every individual needs the understanding and support of public opinion to become integrated into our democratic society. To achieve this integration the individuals or groups who wish to present their case to the public must employ one or more of the media of communication. These media – the press, radio, television, cable, motion pictures, direct mail and so on – now have an immense impact, reaching millions of people, sometimes the entire nation.

The web of communications, sometimes duplicating, crisscrossing and overlapping, is a condition of fact, not theory. The significance of modern communications must be recognized as a highly organized mechanical web and a potent force for social good or possible evil. Only by mastering the techniques of communication can leadership be exercised fruitfully in the vast, complex democracy that is the United States.

With the aid of technicians who have specialized in utilizing the channels of communication, leaders can accomplish purposefully and scientifically the "engineering of consent."

This phrase means, quite simply, the use of an engineering approach – that is, action based only on thorough knowledge of the situation, application of scientific principles and tested practices which persuade people to support ideas and programs. Any person or organization depends ultimately on public approval and therefore faces the problem of engineering the public's consent to a program or goal.

We expect our elected government officials to try to engineer our consent for the measures they propose through the network of communications open to them. We reject government authoritarianism or regimentation, but we are willing to be persuaded by the written or spoken word. The engineering of consent is the very essence of the democratic process, the freedom to persuade and suggest. The freedoms of speech, press, petition, and assembly – freedoms that make engineering consent possible – have tacitly expanded our Bill of Rights

to include the right of persuasion. All these media provide open doors to the public mind, and through them any one of us may influence the attitudes and actions of our fellow citizens.

Knowledge of how to use this enormous amplifying system becomes a matter of primary concern to all persons interested in socially constructive action.

Theoretically and practically consent should be based on the complete understanding by those whom the engineering attempts to win over. But it is sometimes impossible to reach joint decisions based on an understanding of facts by all the people. With pressing crises and decisions to be faced, often leaders cannot wait for the people to arrive at even general understanding. In certain cases, democratic leaders must lead the public through the engineering of consent to socially constructive goals and values. This role naturally imposes upon them the obligation to use educational processes, as well as other available techniques, to bring about as complete an understanding as possible.

Today it is impossible to overestimate the importance of engineering consent. It affects almost every aspect of our daily lives. When used for social purposes, it is among our most valuable contributions to the efficient functioning of modern society.

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Books on public relations usually place undue emphasis on the minutiae of public relations. They discuss the proper fashioning of the tools – selection of lists, rules for copy preparation, and other subjects – but neglect the guiding philosophy and basic techniques which enable the tools to be used efficiently. It is as if books on surgery concerned themselves mainly with the shape and sharpness of surgical instruments and how to wield them. Obviously a knowledge of what characterizes a good public relations tool is important, but it is by no means the whole story.

We must first examine public relations from the broad viewpoint – consider what it is, what relation it has to society, how it approaches a problem and how that approach is made. Of necessity, we must define public relations before we can discuss these aspects.

Public relations is the attempt, by adjustment, information and persuasion, to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or institution.

Adjustment is a primary element in good public relations. It is now generally recognized that people, groups and organizations need to adjust to one another if we are to have a smooth-running society. A company that does not adjust its attitudes and actions to the public suffers the result of poor public relations. A public that lacks understanding of a company is also adversely affected. Ignorance, prejudice, apathy and

distortions need to be corrected. When maladjustments are based on real abuses, the offending conditions should be changed. Maladjustments caused by imagined abuses or misunderstandings also need to be corrected. Information and persuasion are necessary tools in adjusting these conditions.

The use of *information* in public relations obviously is not merely the act of expressing an idea or stating a fact. It is a complicated effort toward a specific end, using highly complex communication media and techniques.

Persuasion, the third base on which public relations rests, is an inseparable part of a democratic way of life. On the whole, persuasion fills a great social need. But like other rights, the right of persuasion is subject to abuses. It would be ideal if all of us could make up our minds independently by evaluating all pertinent facts objectively. This, however, is not possible. None of us has access to all facts about everything.

Developing the "engineering of consent"

Most problems, it has been found, can be handled effectively by proceeding according to the following pattern:

1. Define goals or objectives.
2. Research publics.
3. Modify objectives to reach goals that research shows are attainable.
4. Plan strategy.
5. Select themes, symbols and appeals.
6. Blueprint the organization.
7. Plan and time tactics.
8. Develop budget.

Define goals and objectives

Every public relations activity should have an objective, a goal, an end towards which activities are directed. Naturally, these goals vary in each case. They differ as to the time needed to attain the goal and as to the publics on which success depends.

Often a goal is not defined at the outset. Frequently, people who control the destiny of an enterprise have not agreed upon their objective. The enterprise has just grown and goals may never have been examined by the policymakers. That is regrettable, for then the public relations effort becomes unrelated to an end. Any public relations activity should carefully and exactly define its objectives, however difficult it is to do.

The first step in defining objectives is to bring about a meeting of minds of the policymakers, to get them to agree on specific objectives. In defining objectives there must be a balance of all the demands made by the different publics on which the success of an enterprise depends.

Defining the objective in any public relations activity

requires a realistic approach to integrate your interest with those of the various publics.

Consistent with defining your objectives is the need to validate them through the approval and support of "disinterested," independent authorities. By doing so, you represent to specific targeted audiences, as well as the general public, that your objectives are important and clearly in the public interest.

Validation is analogous to playing the game of billiards rather than pool. If you assert yourself directly on the various elements of society, as one ball directly hits another in pool, you will be labeled a *propagandist* by those whose attitudes and actions you are attempting to modify. This is always a potential fallout of public relations. However, if you have independent sources deliver your message indirectly, as a billiard shot uses a cushion before hitting its target, you are more likely to gain acceptance and achieve the desired social ends.

Consistent with defining your objectives is the need to validate them through the approval and support of "disinterested," independent authorities. By doing so, you represent to specific targeted audiences, as well as the general public, that your objectives are important and clearly in the public interest.

Defining and validating objectives assures they are sound and do not represent simply hopes and desires based on a subjective evaluation of the circumstances. Finally, objectives, to be realized, must be attainable, otherwise you are wasting time and effort in activities based on preconceptions with little relation to reality.

Research publics

That brings you to the next step in an effective public relations approach – research. You *must research* your publics before you start the process of interest integration. Social scientists and professional researchers have developed methods which help any group or individual chart a course accurately by sounding out the public before proceeding.

In planning for research, keep in mind both the goal to be sought and the amount of money, time and effort to be spent in conducting the research. The research budget will need to be considered in terms of the total effort. The research expenditure, if it is effectively used, will save time and effort and cut down elements of chance. Whatever the sum that can be allotted to it, a little research well planned is better than no research at all.

Modify objectives

Research may indicate the goals you have set for yourself are completely unrealistic in terms of the resources available to meet them. Your situation also may make your goals impossible to achieve. Some realities that may jeopardize your goals include competitive situations or a prejudiced public unwilling to accept your project.

You may have to modify your objectives in one direction or another. You may find after your research that more comprehensive objectives are attainable in a shorter time and with

less effort. Or you may find that only more limited objectives are attainable through the proposed effort. But whatever you find, you will be using the facts that the research has uncovered to help you check the goal you set originally.

Plan strategy

Strategy should be formulated on the basis of your research. Decisions need to be made on how to use your available resources of the four "m's" – mindpower, manpower, mechanics and money. Strategy is all important. Without correct strategy, nothing will be accomplished, or, at best, what is accomplished will be purchased only at great waste of time, money and effort.

Let us consider its place in the whole public relations picture. Correct strategy is the essential link between formulating the objective, conducting the research, and putting in motion the plan of action to achieve the desired result.

There must be strategic planning at the topmost level before the campaign begins – not merely planning specific tactics, timing or allocation of forces. Though all of these are essential, strategic planning is something above and beyond those. It consists of the first great decisions – the ones which delimit all other activity. It involves rejection as well as acceptance.

There are many basic strategies and infinite variations of each. It is the duty of the public relations counsel, working with the client, to set up the correct basic strategy for the problem at hand.

And each problem must be faced completely afresh. Experience, it is true, will contribute to a correct approach, but there must not be stereotypic thinking when formulating strategy. Problems may parallel one another, but they are never exact duplicates. Planning the correct strategy to meet each new problem is one of the most fascinating aspects of public relations work.

Select themes

Allied to strategy, and in a sense a part of it, is the selection of overall themes for the campaign. These themes are to the campaign what the "story line" is in a work of fiction. They embody the ideas to be conveyed; they channel the lines of approach to the several publics. They are expressed over and over again, in ever varied form. They condition all that is verbally or visually presented through the various media of communication.

In selecting the proper themes to project the campaign message, the public relations counsel must first match up the campaign objectives with those fundamental human desires which can be satisfied by the campaign's success. Themes are applied, varied to suit the circumstance, and accented or

subordinated in accordance with campaign strategy and tactics.

The tremendous role of the theme in all successful public relations efforts cannot be overemphasized. Rapport with one's publics depends on the correct choice and use of themes. Unless the public relations effort can be made to coincide with fundamental motivations, the public's interest will be only fragmentary and transitory.

It is obvious, of course, many objectives can appeal to more than one basic motivation, and, therefore, a variety of themes can be used in nearly every campaign. Indeed, a single objective may, in some instances, appeal to almost the entire gamut of human motivation and thus make possible an almost endless variety of themes. Likewise, with a variety of objectives, there is a corresponding variety of applicable themes.

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It is, however, impossible to discuss themes realistically without some mention of the symbol. Symbols are shortcuts to understanding, and through them themes are most frequently and most effectively expressed. The themes, though ever present, are nevertheless intangible. On the other hand, symbols are frequently, though not always, very tangible.

A symbol may be anything that stands for an idea. The flag is the symbol for patriotism. The wedding veil is the symbol of purity. The crown is the symbol of power. This list is infinite.

A real test of public relations ability is the recognition and selection of symbols best suited to project chosen themes. And another test is devising all possible ways to project those symbols to the desired publics. Symbols may be projected both audibly and visually, by representation as well as in actuality.

Though objectives have been clarified, research completed, overall strategy determined and themes selected, we still are not in touch with our publics. How can this be accomplished?

Blueprint the organization

The next step is organization – the marshåling of all the necessary forces in terms of money, people and facilities needed to insure an effective campaign. Such organization will include not only all necessary regular staff workers, but also contract work from time to time, for such things as opinion research, fund raising, radio, TV and motion picture advice and production, and other assignments.

Improvisation in music often is delightful, but when depended upon to carry a public relations campaign, it is disastrous. Insofar as possible, everything should be thought through and provided for before the campaign begins. Enough unexpected situations always will arise without inviting more through the failure to organize effectively in advance.

Obviously the term "organization" is very broad, and it frequently becomes part of "planning," "tactics" or even

"strategy." But however defined, the approach is vital.

Just as an undirected army is only a mob, so an unorganized public relations effort is only chaos compounded. Before any objective can be obtained, it is necessary not only to know where you are going but also how you are to get there.

A successful public relations effort always depends on the constant interplay of many different talents and skills – executive, writing, research, clerical, production and so on. Those with these skills and abilities must be recruited in sufficient numbers, properly housed and provided with necessary equipment. Lines of authority and responsibility must be clearly established and the workload assigned. All this must be done before the public relations effort really gets under way.

Plan and time tactics

Planning, as it relates to every phase of operation, must be done in advance. Just as an engineer, before building a bridge, works out every detail to the most minute degree before any orders for materials are given, so must the public relations effort be planned with great care and detail.

Engineering implies planning. And it is careful planning more than anything else that distinguishes modern public relations from old-time, "hit or miss" publicity and propaganda.

All the skills of the trained public relations professional go for naught unless he uses them. Regardless of the media employed, the effort must be in accordance with a well-planned action blueprint drawn up in advance.

In these considerations it is important to remember all planning has to be flexible. The engineer provides leeway of safety in calculating stresses and strains. So, too, the public relations plan must have a safety reserve in terms of time, money, staff and techniques to take care of the unforeseen and to allow for taking advantage of the unexpected.

Engineering implies planning. And it is careful planning more than anything else that distinguishes modern public relations from old-time, "hit or miss" publicity and propaganda.

By planning, and only by planning, can we avoid the segmented approach – the nemesis of many public relation efforts.

The special tactics of the campaign include what media to use (such as newspapers, radio, TV, direct mail, word-of-mouth), how often to use them, and what relative emphasis to give each one. The plan also provides for cooperative efforts of other interested group leaders and organizations. It gives careful consideration to timing. In short, it marshals on paper all possible public relations resources applicable to the problem and, theoretically, deploys them to the best advantage.

In public relations the necessity for care extends to every aspect of tactical effort. This care must include things as detailed as proofreading. A careless misprint may convert an otherwise effective mailing piece into a subject of ridicule which will boomerang upon you.

Another important thing to remember about tactics is that

success often is not apparent at once. The effectiveness of public relations is cumulative in nature. Any specific action may be blanketed by competing news, or it may merely start a quiet reaction in some quarter whence the effect ultimately may be very great. The art of public relations is often analogous to the act of a boy dropping stones into a half-filled pail of water. At first nothing much happens. But gradually the water level rises, and finally the bucket overflows – provided, that is, the boy keeps dropping stones long enough.

Develop budget

Ideally your budget will be commensurate with your total public relations plan. This is, unfortunately, not always the situation. Depending on available and prospective funds, the budget should be developed to respond to long-range, intermediate and immediate strategies and tactics. It also is important always to anticipate inflation and changes in plans by building in contingency monies.

The proof of effectiveness in public relations, obviously, is the ultimate attainment of the objective. It is impossible to say which of all the elements – research, strategy, formation of objectives, themes, organization, planning, tactics – is the most vital to this success. They work as a team. But without proper tactical implementation nothing would be accomplished.

This chapter has provided an overall picture of the public relations pattern, showing the interrelation of its various important elements.

Communication is the key to engineering consent for social action. But it is not enough to get out leaflets and bulletins on the photocopy machines, to place releases in the newspapers, or to fill the airwaves with TV and radio talks. Words, sounds and pictures accomplish little unless they are the tools of a soundly developed plan and carefully organized methods. If the plans are well-formulated and properly used, the ideas conveyed by words will become part and parcel of the people themselves.

When the public is convinced of the soundness of an idea, it will proceed to action. Public relations involves every action or attitude of an institution toward the publics on which it depends. An institution's good public relations, therefore, is based on actions that reflect the broadest public interest. This should enable educational institutions not only to carry on successfully, but also to forge ahead boldly and assert the intelligent leadership so essential to our democracy today and in the future.

Reprinted in part from Public Relations *(1952) and* The Engineering of Consent *(1955) by Edward L. Bernays, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma.*

CHAPTER II

School public relations

Building and maintaining public confidence in education is one of the most important tasks schools face. To reach this end educators must develop a sophisticated understanding of the public relations process.

Public relations, according to those applying it, is the practice of social responsibility, a necessary building block for encouraging public understanding and support. Quite simply, it is a matter of doing the right thing and making sure people know about it.

Several national studies and surveys have stressed the importance of community-school relations as a determining factor of educational effectiveness. Among these is the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which states, "Of all the tools at hand, the public's support for education is the most powerful."

The application of public relations to education is a growing trend, but practitioners must consider several significant characteristics that call for special attention:

- *Multiple publics.* Schools normally have at least two major publics to work with from a public relations perspective: one is internal, the clients (students and employees), and the other is external, the funders (general public and government). The former requires resource allocation and the latter, resource attraction.
- *Multiple objectives.* Schools tend to pursue several important objectives simultaneously, rather than only one, such as monetary profits. Administrators must evaluate the relative importance of the several objectives when developing appropriate strategies.
- *Service provider.* Schools provide services rather than produce goods. Because services are for the most part intangible and variable, public relations planning must take this into account.
- *Public scrutiny.* Schools usually are subjected to close scrutiny because they are subsidized, tax-exempt and mandated into existence. They experience political pressures from various publics. In addition, they are expected to

operate in the public interest, and, consequently, their public relations activities are likely to be closely scrutinized.

- *Evaluation difficulties.* Perhaps the most frustrating characteristic for schools and educators is the difficulty of providing objective evaluation or interpretation of the effectiveness of their efforts. Education and its related public relations activities are predominately subjective and rely on qualitative measurement.

Increasing public confidence in education is a complex process. It involves a fine tuning of the education system to meet both the needs of individual students and the needs of a progressive, humane society. It also requires the development and refinement of superior communication systems to disseminate information internally and externally. An effective plan provides ideas for spreading good news about education as well as a forum for resolving differences.

The foundation for increased public confidence includes understanding the problems facing education and the efforts implemented to solve them, recognizing the successes of public education, and increasing public support and commitment to education.

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Effecting change

Change of any type usually is met with some resistance. However, proper public relations can alleviate problems and motivate targeted audiences to support and participate actively in proposed changes.

In a 1971 article George Gallup, an acknowledged expert on polling, public attitudes and human behavior, identified seven basic principles for promoting educational change.

Principle I: Appeal to the self-interests of the consumer. This is a commonly accepted idea which needs little elaboration except to state that the "consumer" groups for public schools include every member of the educational bureaucracy and every citizen whose funds support the public school system. It is important to work out carefully how any proposed change will affect the self-interests of consumer group members. But this group can be divided into smaller groups, hence:

Principle II: Define with some precision the consumer group or groups to which the appeal should be made and conduct the appeal accordingly. Many people in public life overlook this principle. For example, spokesmen for the political "left" and "right" often are guilty of using a style, rhetoric or argument designed to appeal to their own peer group. Such approaches have little chance of effectively changing the behavior or attitudes of "the other side." On the contrary, they are apt to reinforce existing biases or prejudices.

John Gardner, former secretary of the U.S. Department of

Health, Education and Welfare, said our cities are no longer communities, but encampments of strangers. The same description fits many of our school systems. Although the educator often speaks of a "community of scholars" or "the school community," too often we find encampments of faculty, parents, students, administrators and others, each with different viewpoints, different needs and different biases. The educator interested in educational change should recognize these encampments as different consumer groups.

Principle III: Never underestimate the intelligence of the consumer. Educators have no monopoly on intelligence, and patronizing or condescending communications or oversimplified messages are more likely to offend than gain support.

Principle IV: Never overestimate the knowledge of the consumer. In business situations speakers often casually state, "Of course, as you know," and then proceed to build a thesis around a principle or concept which, in fact, the consumer does not know or understand. If there is no opportunity to respond to questions and clarify the issue satisfactorily, the entire point of the presentation is missed.

Educators interested in educational change should not assume the consumer group to which they are appealing knows as much as they do about a particular issue, idea or educational development. It is necessary to bring a group along at its own rate so subsequent discussion and action can be based on *commonly* accepted and understood definitions and assumptions.

Principle V: Provide evidence that clearly demonstrates your product's value. Research shows clearly that demonstrations of product claims are infinitely more productive than unsupported praise, cartoon analogies and the like. Substantiate, as well as possible, the product not only does what is claimed but also supports the goals of the consumer. This implies, of course, schools or school districts have clearly defined goals and objectives, and many, unfortunately, do not.

Principle VI: Repetition is a necessary function of good marketing. In this context repetition is not analogous to constantly beating the mule over the head with a 2x4 to get his attention. Individual consumer groups, just as individual people, react differently to various stimuli, styles and situations. Therefore, it is incumbent on the educator interested in changing attitudes or behaviors to use the most appropriate methods, techniques, human resources and combinations of media to make the point.

Principle VII: Know and "sell" the purpose of the product. There has been a plethora of inventions and innovations designed to effect rational educational change. In most cases, they have been invented to achieve a clearly defined purpose, objective or goal of the educational process. Yet, the accep-

tance of these inventions by the educational consumer has been less than spectacular. One reason for this might be that practicing educators have failed to use the new tool properly or, worse yet, never understood its precise purpose in the first place.

School improvement will depend on educators recognizing the future of education rests largely with people not directly involved or identified with public schools.

Schools and public attitudes

Reaching out to the community through public relations is critical to the school system.

"The public is not ignoring schools anymore," says Larry Ascough, director of public relations for the expansive Dallas Independent School District. "The general public used to take schools for granted," says Ascough. "Now they're watching to see how effective we are."

Budget allocations, state test results and safety concerns are coming under increasing public scrutiny.

Many schools have a tendency to do nothing about public relations, yet they need public relations if they want to improve the education process.

"Sometimes educators don't perceive they have a problem," says Tari Marshall, director of public relations for The National PTA. "But they may need to get out in the community and find out what the community's perception is of the school."

In many instances, even efforts by those school districts with public relations programs are inadequate. As a result, education still suffers from a poor image and lack of public support. Lyle Hamilton, public relations manager of the National Education Association, is among the critics of existing school district programs because, he says, they concentrate too heavily on publicity and meeting dates.

As public institutions, it is incumbent on schools to know public wants and concerns, especially since it is the public's money being spent. In 1985-86, $135 billion in tax money was spent on public education. It seems only logical that the nation's taxpayers should be concerned and informed about their schools.

As public institutions, it is incumbent on schools to know public wants and concerns, especially since it is the public's money being spent. In 1985-86, $135 billion in tax money was spent on public education. It seems only logical that the nation's taxpayers should be concerned and informed about *their* schools.

Their interest and concern, however, must be sought and welcomed by school administrators *before* there are serious problems. Otherwise public attention, when it comes, likely will be negative.

Research has shown the better a school communicates with its community and the more the public is involved with a school, the better the public will understand and accurately perceive that school. The 1985 Gallup poll points out those individuals most closely in touch with the schools and their

operation perceive them more favorably.

Building partnerships

Ruth Whitman, assistant director of public relations for the American Federation of Teachers, points out that since problems differ from city to city and from school to school, it is important local school people ascertain the issues in their own communities and develop strategies to address them.

"The situation in Miami may be different from the situation in Detroit, which is different from that in Los Angeles," says Whitman, who uses school violence as an example.

"School violence is a reflection of the community at large, therefore, total community involvement is important," she says. "Such a community-based concern must have a community-based solution. One blanket approach may not work for everyone."

The most effective way to get the community involved is through participation in school programs and activities from the outset. People are more willing to support a project if they feel a sense of ownership based on their involvement in developing the plan.

As most educators have learned firsthand, so much in the total life of a city affects the school system and the children and adults it serves. Even the most capable school boards and superintendents sometimes must fight conditions over which they have little control, such as crime, poverty, drugs and urban decay.

School administrators must keep in mind schools are interdependent with other social systems and can be changed only through the intensive involvement of those other systems.

The most effective way to get the community involved is through participation in school programs and activities from the outset. People are more willing to support a project if they feel a sense of ownership based on their involvement in developing the plan.

Donald Gallagher, author and communications professor at New Jersey's Glassboro College, illustrates the "ownership" concept using the example of discipline problems at a school.

He says the first step is to form a citizen advisory group to deal specifically with discipline. Such a group should include community residents, parents and law enforcers.

"You let them come up with some code of discipline," Gallagher suggests. "Since it's put together by a group, it's not 'the school's' discipline policy, it's 'our' policy."

The Dallas Independent School District, with one of the most extensive school public relations programs in the nation, has tried to establish working relationships with all groups in the community. Task forces which represent business, religious and civic organizations have been established in the district. In addition, special advisory committees respond to the needs of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics and other special interest groups.

Internal publics

There's a saying in the profession that public relations begins at home.

Patrick Jackson, public relations counsel with the New Hampshire firm of Jackson, Jackson & Wagner, says the first role of school public relations practitioners is to "educate their own clients" and make sure the school board, administrators and employees understand the meaning of public relations.

"Public relations begins inside the outfit," says Jackson, who advocates spending more time with internal rather than external communications. "Our role is to see that there is teamwork and motivation internally. We have to get everyone inside the school together, singing in one clear voice."

While many people think of public relations in a formal sense, it should also be remembered public relations is inherent in just about everything that is done. For this reason, it benefits schools to have good communications with their employees and students. People in the community who have no ties to the school may look to a student or a school employee for information about the school.

"Each of us is an ambassador, an advocate of schools," says Phil Smith, director of communications for the National School Boards Association. "The best PR is the way each of us conducts ourselves in our role within the system," says Smith. "Grassroots PR is really the best groundwork."

Key groups within the school system to include in public relations activities are school board members, school employees and students.

External publics

Most external public relations efforts by schools traditionally have been focused on parents. This practice is understandable since parent interest in schools is the most obvious. However, schools also belong to the general public, not just to parents and students.

While parents are certainly a key public which must be continually informed and involved, most of the adult population do not have children in school. Therefore, efforts must be made to reach those publics not reached by such standard communications as parent newsletters, PTA meetings and open houses. Only 27 percent of all households have school-aged children, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This means more than two-thirds of the country's adult population have no direct connection with public schools.

As Hamilton of the National Education Association points out, "Why should they pay increasing taxes to support schools if schools aren't doing anything for them? You have to give them something in return – involve them in everyday school life."

Good public relations practices include identifying key external publics and establishing two-way communications with them to improve the institution and its services.

Regardless of the size of a community or district, there are several key external publics to be considered in planning public relations efforts: parents, community residents, service groups, business leaders, government representatives, law enforcers and media representatives.

Lew Armistead, director of public information for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, also advocates community involvement.

"We're seeing more and more of a commitment for broader community involvement," Armistead observes. "School people can't do it all themselves. They need public support."

Media relations

In the course of their work school public relations directors usually interact with the media. While media relations and publicity should not be an all-consuming priority, it is definitely one of the functions of the school public relations directors.

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To reach the broadest audience, school news often is funneled into existing channels of communication offered by the mass media – radio, television and the press.

Mass media exist in every community, from small weekly newspapers and local radio stations to large dailies and television stations that cover extended metropolitan areas.

A professional relationship should be initiated and maintained with editors, station managers and education reporters for local print and broadcast media. The school public relations director needs to be recognized by the media as the education resource specialist.

Lesly's Public Relations Handbook notes there are generally three forms of media relations:

- *Responding to media requests.* This service function requires having information and sources organized then conscientiously responding to the initiatives of those served.
- *Arranging for coverage and dissemination of information.* This calls for a constant awareness of school and district news-making events and routine contact with the media.
- *Stimulating media coverage.* This requires creative development of ideas and concepts to stimulate the media to carry the school or district information and viewpoint.

A basic tool of the public relations practitioner is the news release, the primary written method of conveying information to the media for print or broadcast.

When preparing a news release, remember the basic facts it should include:

- Who is the story about or who is announcing it?

- What is happening or being announced?
- When is it happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Why is it happening?
- How will it happen or how will it affect the public?

Not all stories will answer all six points, but the majority will cover most. Use names in your stories, making sure to spell them correctly, and include affiliations and titles when necessary.

Do not clutter a news release with extraneous information. The release's purpose is to disseminate information in a clear, concise manner. The clever writing should be left to staff members of the media.

When writing a release, use the inverted pyramid style in which the most important material is at the beginning of the story and the least important at the end. Copy often will be shortened before it is used because of limited space or time. If the news release is prepared in the inverted pyramid style, the best information, placed at the top, is less likely to be affected by cuts.

The standard news release format calls for using a good grade of white, 8½ by 11 inch paper with the copy typed and double-spaced. Always include the date the material is to be released, specifying either "for immediate release" or for a specific release date, including the day, month and year. Remember to include your name, address and phone number at the top of every paper given to the media.

Another important and useful tool of the school public relations person is the fact sheet – a single page of statistical data about your schools which reporters, editors and station managers can keep at their fingertips. Such a sheet should include the basics about your schools or district, including size, enrollment, budget, staff, grades, class sizes, average daily attendance and other background material. It should be updated regularly.

A photograph file for the district also should be maintained. Include current 5 by 7 inch, black and white glossy photos of the superintendent, other top administrators and all principals. Also maintain a comprehensive and current file of photographs representing special school programs and activities for use in district publications, as well as for the media.

Public service advertising

Public service announcements (PSAs) are an increasingly accepted and effective means of communicating a nonprofit organization's message. As the name implies, the announcements are run free of charge as a public service. Stations will only provide the free air time to nonprofit organizations for non-commercial and non-controversial purposes.

TV, radio and print media PSAs are useful as one component of a comprehensive communications plan. Within the context of an overall campaign, PSAs can help create an awareness and sensitize the public to an issue.

The task of directing a community-based media communications program requires a thorough understanding of public opinion. Two basic elements from the receiver's perspective must be addressed: "What's in it for me?" and "What do you want me to do?" Recipients should view the message as personally relevant to them rather than to some ambiguous "other person" or the general population. This is why successful campaign appeals often address "you" instead of "we."

Defining the recipient's role or identifying a *call to action* is the key component of the communications campaign. Campaigns that concentrate on what people should *not* do are not nearly as effective as those which focus on the positive – what people *can* do. Because many social causes are the result of concerns or problems, it is easy to fall victim to *negative* themes and appeals: "Don't drink and drive" and "Say no to drugs." Although *positive* conceptually, they are presented as *don't* do something *negative* as opposed to *do* something *positive.*

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Examples of positive slogans include: "Keep America beautiful," "Lend a hand" (a campaign for volunteerism), and "Take stock in America" (for U.S. Savings Bonds). The National School Safety Center uses this concept describing its function as promoting school safety and quality education – as opposed to "stopping school crime and violence."

Criteria for broadcast PSAs may vary from city to city and station to station, but some general policy guidelines include:

- The organization submitting the announcement should be nonprofit and spend no more than 40 percent of its budget on fund raising.
- The message should be non-commercial.
- The content should not be sexually explicit or vulgar.
- The message should be of interest to a large audience.
- The message should be of local interest, although it may also have national relevance.
- PSAs should run precisely 10-, 20-, 30- or 60-seconds in length.
- Whenever possible, contact the public service coordinator for information on the station's preferred format.
- Submissions should be made at least three to five weeks in advance of any event being announced.

Crisis communication

A school public relations program must include a plan designed specifically for times of crisis. Maintaining good communications with all publics is always important, but it is

especially crucial during a crisis situation.

A "crisis" can range from murder on the campus to a trash fire in a storeroom. However trivial an incident may seem, it can escalate into a major emergency situation without set procedures for dealing with the school population and the community at large.

A clear, well-organized plan may mean the difference between level-headed actions and solutions or danger and panic. While no one is ever completely ready for an emergency, risks can be minimized with an organized plan that assures constant and consistent communications and designates responsibilities to specific staff members and administrators.

The plan should include procedures for communicating the facts to the proper authorities, parents and the general public. Reports should be made as quickly as information is known and as often as new facts become available.

Public relations practitioners know that if reporters do not get the information from one source, they will get it from another, and it may be more distorted and damaging if it comes from a source other than the school.

Especially during a crisis, it is important to keep the news media informed. It can be destructive to try to cover up something instead of being open and truthful.

"The important thing to keep in mind is you want to keep information flowing," says Patricia McCormack, health and education editor for United Press International news service. "The school-media relationship is not a case of 'us against them.' " Public relations practitioners know that if reporters do not get the information from one source, they will get it from another, and it may be more distorted and damaging if it comes from a source other than the school.

"It's foolhardy to try to cover things up," says McCormack. "You don't hold all the strings . . . the reporter has many sources of information. The school can't act as censor."

"You have to level with people," she adds. "Tell them, 'These things happened in our schools,' and tell them what you're doing about it."

A well-developed plan of action for working with the media should be established for those crisis periods. Some important considerations to keep in mind include:

- Have media policy worked out in advance. Spell out who will be the media spokesperson, and make it clear no one else should speak *officially* for the schools or agency. At the same time, however, keep school employees and students current on the situation. They likely will be *unofficial* school representatives.
- Route all media inquiries to one person or at least one office.
- Prepare an official statement responding to the particular crisis situation. Read from or distribute this statement when media inquiries are made. This will maintain consistency.
- Anticipate media questions and prepare and rehearse answers. Play devil's advocate and develop answers to all

potentially sensitive and controversial questions.

- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." This is better than being caught in a lie or responding with the offensive phrase, "No comment." It is important, though, to volunteer to get the answer and follow up within a specified time. Reporters will appreciate your consideration of their deadlines.
- Be brief. Don't cloud the issues with superfluous information or professional jargon. Keep comments to the point and repeat them as necessary.
- Start a rumor control center, if the situation warrants. Publish a number for the public to call if they hear a rumor or need information.
- Consider providing a special unlisted number for media representatives to call in case traffic gets heavy on your regular lines.
- Provide the news media with updates as events unfold, even after the initial crisis is handled.
- Keep calm and maintain a professional manner.

Personal contact

Although public relations alone may not provide all the solutions to school problems, it is certainly a part of any solution. In many cases, public relations efforts are prevention methods.

Personal contact is vital to any public relations program. Whether it's teachers making a point of meeting with parents or the principal knocking on doors and talking to community residents, all such efforts will be beneficial. One-to-one communication is often the best way to get the message that involvement and support of individuals in the community is wanted and needed. You are dealing with people, so it only makes sense to have person-to-person communication.

Efforts by school administrators and public relations directors to keep their eyes and ears open usually pay off because they can keep in tune with public attitudes. This allows immediate action to address concerns before they become serious problems.

Effective school public relations promotes quality education by establishing and maintaining a program of internal and external communications that is both ongoing and comprehensive.

CHAPTER III

School safety and public opinion

"The *Safety First* movement, by its use of every form of appeal, from poster to circular, from lecture to law enforcement, from motion pictures to 'safety weeks,' is bringing about a gradual change in the attitude of a safety-deserving public towards the taking of unnecessary risks."

So wrote Edward L. Bernays in *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, a book published in 1923 and considered the benchmark for the public relations profession. The successful public safety movement to which Bernays refers is dated only chronologically. Its message remains as relevant and its strategies and tactics are as applicable today as they were more than a half a century ago.

A new national safety movement is emerging in response to the contemporary problems of today's school campuses. Through creative and cooperative school and community efforts, this new movement can be as successful as its 1920's predecessor.

America is committed to providing its citizens with a free, public education and the opportunity to attain academic excellence. Such excellence cannot be achieved, however, without safe, secure and welcoming school campuses. Only in such settings are students and teachers able to devote their full attention to academic goals.

Too often the public expresses concern that America's schools are not attaining this ideal. Opinion polls indicate a desire for improved discipline and for a crackdown on student drug traffic and abuse. Clearly, the public is alarmed by these problems that interfere with the orderly, safe and successful operation of our schools.

This concern really should not come as much of a surprise. News media reports and official government studies provide alarming statistics:

- Replacement and repair costs resulting from school crime are estimated to range between $100 million to $200 million a year.
- Approximately one out of four youngsters entering the educational system never graduates from high school.

- Nearly two-thirds of America's teen-agers have used illegal drugs before they graduate from high school.

Such information hardly can be expected to encourage public confidence in the safety of our nation's schools. It is up to the schools to respond to negative public attitudes and perceptions and to promote public awareness and involvement in the schools.

The 1978 *Violent Schools-Safe Schools* report from the National Institute of Education (NIE), points to poor community-school relations as one factor in the incidence of school crime and behavior. The study indicates schools with positive community relations are likely to have fewer violence and vandalism problems. It makes sense that school crime rates decrease when schools receive increased support from parents, law enforcement and other community sources.

No matter how well-qualified the teachers or how attractive the school setting, students cannot achieve their academic potential in an environment of fear, crime and violence. Safe campuses are requisite for quality education.

Principal Rueben Trinidad understands this relationship. During the summer of 1983 Trinidad recruited a group of parents, students and teachers to paint their high school in San Jose, California. Trinidad reports there has been no major vandalism or graffiti since.

In Columbus, Ohio, Principal James Voyles also enlists community members as active partners in education. The Kiwanis Club sponsors a student group to work on community and school service projects. Representatives of the state employment bureau provide job counseling, tutoring, speakers and internships. A local United Way agency offers delinquency prevention programs and counseling for students and parents. Voyles also brings in successful community leaders to provide role models for students. A positive side effect of these efforts is an improved campus climate.

Unsafe campuses are a special threat to those working and teaching there. When teachers, the foundation of the educational process, are forced to instruct in unsafe situations, clearly their performance in the classroom is adversely affected.

And when crime and violence from our communities invade the school, students suffer a double loss. They are physically injured as victims of school crime and then hurt again when they forfeit effective learning opportunities because negative behavior interrupts instruction. No matter how well-qualified the teachers or how attractive the school setting, students cannot achieve their academic potential in an environment of fear, crime and violence. Safe campuses are requisite for quality education.

Ensuring safe conditions in our nation's schools should be a priority for everyone. Only when serious campus problems – crime and violence, drug traffic and abuse, lack of discipline and poor attendance – are addressed and corrected will schools experience improved learning, morale, trust and respect.

School crime and violence

The fear some students experience at school often is well-founded. The NIE school crime and violence study offers these insights:

- Approximately 282,000 students are physically attacked in America's secondary schools each month.
- An estimated 525,000 attacks, shakedowns and robberies occur in an average month in public secondary schools.
- In a typical month about 125,000 secondary school teachers (12 percent) are threatened with physical harm, and approximately 5,200 actually are physically attacked.
- Burglaries occur five times more often in schools than in businesses.
- Almost 8 percent of urban junior and senior high school students miss at least one day of school each month because they are afraid to attend.

In a 1985 decision the U.S. Supreme Court wrote, "Maintaining order in the classroom has never been easy, but in recent years school disorder has taken particularly ugly forms: drug use and violent crime in the schools have become major problems."

While there has been no comprehensive, national follow-up study to the 1978 NIE report, recent observations indicate these trends continue.

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), testifying in 1985 Senate subcommittee hearings, said, "We know there is continuing school violence . . . that incidents continue at an unacceptable rate."

In a 1985 decision the U.S. Supreme Court wrote, "Maintaining order in the classroom has never been easy, but in recent years school disorder has taken particularly ugly forms: drug use and violent crime in the schools have become major problems."

Crime and violence do not start or stop at the schoolhouse door. Campus and community problems are interrelated, and publicly supported efforts are necessary to combat disruptions.

Positive involvement by local law enforcers is a priority for Patricia Black, who has turned her Bronx, New York, vocational high school into "an oasis" in an "otherwise devastated neighborhood," according to the State Department of Education. One of her first contacts as principal was with the local police precinct's public relations officer, who now regularly visits the school, meets with students and promotes school safety.

School safety and the law

Public relations can have an effect far greater than simply making the public feel good about schools. An effective program can develop and restore student and public confidence and may have the long-term effect of preventing costly court litigations. Lawsuits against schools are becoming increasingly common as individuals vent their frustration and demand significant financial damages for unsafe conditions on campus.

Former U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger,

reflecting on this problem, said, "The serious challenge of restoring a safe school environment has begun to reshape the law."

This is most clearly seen in California, where the drive to promote safe schools led to an amendment to the state constitution. The provision states students and schools employees have "the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful." A recent court ruling upheld this amendment and found one school district liable for damages because it failed to provide a safe learning environment.

Throughout the nation, as in California, litigation is redefining the school system's responsibility to provide safe learning environments. Basing their decisions on the importance of maintaining school discipline and order, judges have upheld the rights of educators in some cases involving disruptive remarks at a school assembly and searches of students, their property and school lockers. However, schools have been found liable in lawsuits involving sexual misconduct by school employees, personal injury or property damage to students and employees, and abridgment of student free speech.

The human, social and economic problems caused by substance abuse extend well beyond the school. A significant portion of criminal activity by teenagers can be directly linked to the financial demands of drug abuse.

Educators must recognize their responsibility to develop and enforce policies which reflect society's expectations. School crime and violence and other safety related problems are threatening not only the integrity but also the financial stability of this country's educational system. Schools must develop safety strategies that include informing the public and integrating them into the implementation process, a positive step toward preventing future incidents and costly litigation.

Preventing drug traffic and abuse

Drug trafficking and abuse are major problems for society, including the school system. Teen-agers themselves identify drug abuse as the biggest problem they face, with alcohol abuse ranking second, according to the 1984 Gallup youth survey.

A 1985 survey of high school seniors by the University of Michigan shows the prevalence of student drug use, with nearly two-thirds having used drugs at least once before they finish high school. The rapidly increasing use of cocaine is also a major concern. Of the high school seniors polled, 17.3 percent admitted having used cocaine at least once.

The Michigan study also reported on alcohol abuse. The survey found that by the time they are high school seniors, nine out of 10 students have consumed alcohol, many at highly abusive levels.

The human, social and economic problems caused by substance abuse extend well beyond the school. A significant portion of criminal activity by teen-agers can be directly linked to the financial demands of drug abuse. Certainly

society also pays for drug abuse through increased medical and law enforcement costs.

Partnerships between schools, parents, law enforcers and the community are essential to fight this national epidemic.

Parents are a key part of the drug control program initiated by George McKenna, principal of an inner-city Los Angeles high school. McKenna points to parent support as a major factor in eliminating crime, violence and drugs on campus. Parents in school restrooms have helped end drug dealing and use on campus, according to McKenna, whose school is recognized nationally for its exemplary anti-violence program.

Increasing school attendance

School non-attendance is another national concern, in part because the country's economic health is jeopardized by the growing number of uneducated or under-educated youths who are unable to find or keep employment.

U.S. Department of Education statistics for 1984 indicated 29.1 percent of all students leave school before high school graduation. When one in four youngsters is a dropout, both the individual and society lose. Compared to the general public, dropouts are more likely to face unemployment, menial jobs and reliance on public assistance. Society also pays a price for dropouts through increased demands on the social service and criminal justice systems.

Individual communities are adversely affected by dropouts, as well. The reduced income and spending power of non-graduates and their families depresses local economies. Cities can lose businesses and industries which relocate when employers are unable to find an adequate supply of qualified, educated workers.

Truancy is yet another dilemma for the nation's schools and communities. It is estimated 2.5 million students are absent from public schools daily, and a significant percentage are truants who are likely to participate in unproductive, disruptive or even criminal activities. Short-term studies by several communities throughout the nation link truancy to daytime delinquency, particularly residential burglaries. In fact, several studies indicate up to 65 percent of all daylight burglaries are truancy related.

Educators and the public in general are increasingly alarmed by school non-attendance. The annual Gallup Poll of public attitudes consistently indicates citizens believe "truancy/pupil lack of interest" is one of the 10 most serious problems facing schools and the community. For the past five years school absenteeism, including truancy, has ranked at or near the top of concerns identified in the membership poll of the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Student attendance is the responsibility of every member of

the community, even those without school-aged children. Since everyone is directly or indirectly affected by dropout and truancy problems, it is critical citizens work together to support school and community efforts to get and keep young people in the classroom.

In Detroit, Michigan, Principal Emeral Crosby has made the local business community a key part of his school attendance program. Donations from businesses fund a special attendance recognition project for staff and students. Crosby recognizes improved attendance affects school acheivement, and he has made the community a partner in this effort.

Improving discipline

America has long regarded discipline a serious problem facing its schools. In fact, in 16 of the past 17 annual Gallup public attitude surveys, school discipline was viewed as the number one school problem. Discipline - training by instruction or control - is required to respond to a broad range of school situations, from class-cutting and verbal abuse of teachers to drug dealing, robberies and attacks on students. A well-disciplined school provides a learning environment in which students and teachers can be successful. Effective discipline is a deterrent to inappropriate behavior and an important prevention strategy for reducing more serious campus disruptions.

Effective discipline is a deterrent to inappropriate behavior and an important prevention strategy for reducing more serious campus disruptions.

AFT president Shanker says, "Poor discipline policies can breed unsafe schools. Safe schools require the development and enforcement of uniform discipline codes."

Mary H. Futrell, president of the National Education Association, advises discipline problems do not stand in isolation from instructional issues. Futrell describes discipline as "the total school environment that determines the level of civility in the classroom."

Providing safer schools

There are no simple answers to America's complex school safety questions.

The ultimate solution to campus crime and violence is to study, identify and correct the fundamental problems which generate antisocial behavior by young people. A permanent cure can be achieved only if the country's foremost experts in the social sciences - the nation's top psychologists, sociologists, criminologists, medical, legal and other professionals - work together to diagnose the fundamental causes of this social illness and propose antidotes.

Until this goal is attained, however, educators and others involved with our schools must direct their energies to preventing and controlling the symptoms of school crime and violence.

The cooperative, community approach now being imple-

mented throughout the country is an encouraging new trend in addressing school crime and violence. Many of the methods are innovative, and their developers represent a consortium of school administrators, parents, and representatives from community and youth-serving organizations. Through joint efforts, plans are being implemented to correct problems and ensure safer schools. In such communities educators no longer are providing crime prevention programs in isolation.

School administrators are realizing that by assuming a leadership role in developing and implementing such plans to ensure safer schools, they also are revitalizing much needed school-community partnerships, building public confidence and significantly improving the quality of education in the process.

The public relations process – persuading members of the public to accept and integrate into their lives new ideas based on information presented to them – is the vehicle that ultimately may turn the tide of mediocrity into a wave of excellence.

CHAPTER IV

101 school safety ideas

As a school public relations director, it is important to define your role in *active*, not *reactive*, terms. If your day is consumed completing ministerial assignments, responding to the news media and "putting out fires," little time will be left to initiate public relations activities.

Educated Public Relations: School Safety 101 is premised on the importance of adjusting public opinion to make *new* opportunities, not just to solve *old* problems.

While many of the 101 ideas are appropriate to reach multiple publics, for easy reference the ideas have been categorized as *working with* 10 specific groups: school board members, school employees, students, parents, community residents, service groups, business leaders, government representatives, law enforcers and media representatives.

With these various publics identified, it is necessary to determine what response is expected from each. The ultimate response to look for, of course, is a commitment to work with the school district to achieve its specified goals. Commitment, however, is the result of a long and gradual process.

Most individuals or groups can be classified in one of three stages in their relationship to schools. These specific stages are *cognitive* (awareness, knowledge), *affective* (liking, preference) and *behavioral* (commitment, reinforcement). Public relations practitioners must identify in which stage most members of each group fall and plan appropriate channels and tools of communication to motivate them to the next step.

These ideas may be initiated and executed by school district public relations directors, working cooperatively with district superintendents, other administrators and school principals.

Although not all of the following 101 school public relations ideas specifically address school safety issues, they have a common goal – quality education and safe schools. These ideas suggest ways school administrators can work with the various publics as partners to achieve results.

Primary strategies

There are 12 essential ideas which will help inform, persuade

and integrate school safety and public opinion. These strategies will facilitate planning and implementing activities for all your publics.

1. **Convince your school board, superintendent and principals that quality education requires safe, secure and peaceful schools.** Stress the basic concept that school safety is a community concern requiring a community response. School administrators should assume the roles of facilitators and coordinators of community efforts to ensure safe schools.
2. **Develop a school safety clearinghouse for current literature and data on school safety issues.** Much of this material can be obtained from individuals, groups or publications referenced in this book. Key topics to include are school crime and violence, drugs, discipline, attendance and dropouts, vandalism, security, weapons, youth suicide, child abuse and school law.
3. **Help establish a clearly defined, mandatory district policy for reporting disruptive incidents.** This includes a standard form to provide complete, consistent information on accidents, discipline problems, vandalism and security problems, as well as suspected child abuse. After the policy is developed, distribute it to all district personnel and monitor compliance.
4. **Prepare a school safety public information brochure.** It should briefly explain the important issues and the specific roles individuals and groups can play to promote safe and secure schools.
5. **Actively assist district administrators to develop safety policies.** Keep current with trends and exemplary programs in education, public relations and specifically school safety. Make plans and implement them with authority and conviction. Confidence and willingness to accept responsibility are persuasive qualities in the minds of district administration and other school employees. In Rogers' *Rules for Success*, public relations authority Henry Rogers stresses the importance of *psycho-relations*, which he describes as "a tool by which we sell ourselves to other people. Psycho-relations is people relations elevated to the highest level."
6. **Develop and regularly update a school safety fact sheet for your district.** Provide current statistics on incidents of crime and violence, discipline actions and suspensions, attendance, vandalism and repair costs. When appropriate, indicate what percentage of the entire student population the problem students represent. Use this to inform and educate the public and media.
7. **Create a school safety advisory group.** This advisory

group should include representatives from all publics, especially law enforcers, judges, lawyers, health and human services professionals and the media. Individuals should be able to articulate the desires of the groups they represent and relate advisory group actions back to their peers. Seek out members who can be relied upon for consistent, continued support and who are seeking solutions rather than recognition and status from their participation. Recruit group members with special qualifications, such as policymaking authority, access to the media, or the ability to mobilize volunteers or raise funds.

8. **Support America's Safe Schools Week.** The third week (Sunday through Saturday) in October is designated annually as America's Safe Schools Week. The week is sponsored by the National School Safety Center and state governors and schools around the country. This national observance recognizes effective programs and groups that promote safe schools, drug abuse prevention and improved student attendance, and it encourages others to replicate them. This week is an appropriate time to initiate many of these 101 school safety ideas.
9. **Develop and maintain a resource file of "shakers and movers,"** community people known for their abilities to shape public opinion and accomplish goals. Rely on advice from community leaders, as well as the local media, to develop a comprehensive list.
10. **Build a public relations team, starting with school employees.** The education of students is a business which must compete with other interests for public support. School employees are the best public relations people because they are inside authorities. Treat these people as your most important team players. Expressing appreciation and confidence helps maintain high morale. Nominate school principals, teachers and staff for recognition programs sponsored by local groups or state and national associations and government agencies. Such recognition reflects positively on the recipients and the schools and districts in which they are employed. For example, "Principals of Leadership" is a program sponsored by the National School Safety Center specifically to recognize principals who through their effective leadership promote safe campuses and quality education. The 10 principals selected annually are profiled in a national public service advertising campaign. *(See "Appendix A")*
11. **Create a comprehensive identity program for your district.** An institution's identity or image is, in many ways, a direct reflection of its administration, school

employees and students. Develop a symbol to be used on all printed material and distributed to the media for use when reporting on the district. Special promotional items, using this symbol, can include shirts, hats, lapel pins, coffee mugs and bumper stickers. A slogan, if thoughtfully developed and used, also can have a positive effect on the public's perception of the district.

12. **Publish a district magazine and distribute it as widely as possible.** Include board members, district employees, parents, students, community residents, business and civic leaders, local government officials and the media as recipients. The content should be balanced with specific district news and special features on topical education issues. Give the magazine a real name, not a generic title such as "bulletin," "newsletter" or "journal." Creating this name identity is an obvious opportunity to individualize and distinguish your magazine. Readers are more inclined to relate to a publication if aided by a mental association between the title and the contents. Also, it is important to take the advice of the advertising industry and "package your product as attractively as possible to encourage the public to examine the contents." No matter how important the message, it will go unnoticed if it cannot compete with other "attractive distractions" such as TV, recreational reading, and other magazines and newspapers.

Working with school board members

Internal public relations is perhaps the best place to start when developing a comprehensive public relations plan. Board of education members need to "buy in" to the importance of public support for school safety.

Most board members have two objectives. They want to make sure their constituents' views are represented in educational policy and they want recognition for their actions. It is quite acceptable if an action that benefits the school also personally enhances the position of particular board members. A good public relations program provides ample opportunity for credit for all supporters.

13. **Place board members at the top of your mailing list so they receive copies of every internally and externally distributed communication.** This includes the district magazine, student newsletters, events calendars, teacher memorandums, parent notices, activity announcements, news releases and letters of commendation. For especially significant or controversial issues, try to get board members copies of materials in advance of others on the mailing list.

14. **Invite board members to visit school sites regularly.** Develop a standard itinerary and include lunch with students and staff. This personal contact helps break down barriers and stereotypes.
15. **Arrange for board members to make presentations before service groups and the media.** Help them prepare written and visual materials for these presentations, press interviews and radio and television talk show appearances. Include suggestions on how to respond to anticipated questions.
16. **Continually educate board members about the positive benefits of public relations and school safety.** Maintain a constant flow of news articles, trade journal articles and weekly updates on all district news, good and bad.

Working with school employees

School employees, certificated and classified, can be your best or your worst public relations representatives. Often school employees are the only contact community residents have with a school. As an inside authority, their attitudes and opinions carry a great deal of weight locally. Regular district communication with school employees can minimize internal conflict and promote team work. Take the time to circulate among school employees, asking for advice based on their first-hand experiences.

Work stopages – the academic euphemism for strikes – present special challenges. The average citizen does not analyze the specifics of district-employee negotiations, they just know the schools are disrupted. Because it is the primary objective of public relations staff to promote public confidence and support in the schools, always consider the immediate, intermediate and long-term implications of district public relations actions. Readjusting public attitudes about your schools may be even more difficult than rebuilding strained relations with employees after a strike.

17. **Coordinate school safety workshops** which outline the relationship of school safety to quality education and emphasize the need for public support for schools. Educate employees about their specific safety responsibilities.
18. **Coordinate school law seminars for school employees.** Invite law enforcers, lawyers, judges, health and human services officials, and probation officers to train school employees about the juvenile justice system and its relationship to effective schools.
19. **Sponsor classroom management seminars.** Use actual case studies, such as student misbehavior problems from

local schools, as part of the training. This helps teachers identify more readily with the situation and mitigates "that doesn't happen here" attitudes.

20. **Honor meritorious service of school employees with special recognition days and awards.** The administration, students, parents and community residents can all participate by preparing signs, speeches and awards or plaques. Consider placing a full-page "thank-you" announcement listing the names of every teacher in the local newspapers. Introduce a monthly "shining apple" award to be presented to the teacher or staff member who contributes most to improving campus climate.
21. **Print business cards for all school employees.** This is a simple and relatively inexpensive expression of the district's respect for its employees and their work.
22. **Encourage teachers to contact parents regularly,** by phone or letter, to inform them about the good things students are doing. Develop a system to enable teachers to call or write parents routinely and conveniently. Provide space and time for teachers to meet regularly with parents at school and recommend that teachers initiate these informal meetings as frequently as possible. Monitor the participation.
23. **Print shirts, hats, badges or lapel pins with the district symbol** and award them to teachers and staff for exemplary work which has promoted a positive campus climate.
24. **Encourage teachers to incorporate safety topics into the curriculum.** For instance, social studies or civics classes can discuss Gallup's annual school-public attitude polls; physical education courses can include instruction on physical safety; chemistry classes can examine the negative effects of drugs on the human body; English classes can write essays on self-esteem, character education or student misbehavior; and art classes can promote safer campuses by designing posters with safety messages.
25. **Encourage teachers to develop parent-student assignments with safety themes.** For example, teachers can assign an essay discussing current changes in the campus climate or school safety problems compared to those of 20 or 30 years ago. Similar assignments can involve students and grandparents.
26. **Inform teachers and staff of special visitors on campus.** Invite school employees to meet and possibly join special visitors for lunch.
27. **Develop a policy, form or box for suggestions to improve campus climate.** This also can be used as a formal system to recommend students and schools

employees for recognition for special work. Respond to all messages promptly and, when appropriate, personally thank the individual who offered the advice.

28. **Promote school employee professionalism by helping employees get published.** Provide assistance in drafting and submitting feature and technical articles to newspapers and trade journals. Also invite school employees to participate in a district speaker's bureau.
29. **Include retired school employees on your publications mailing list.** Dispel the "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" attitude. These individuals often can be your most vocal supporters and active volunteers.

Working with students

Students are both the cause and victims of much of the crime and misbehavior on campuses. As a doctor seeks input from a patient, school administrators must listen and respond to the messages communicated by students. Most of the following ideas and activities require initiation by administrators and teachers. Once students experience the positive results of these activities, however, they likely will assume the responsibility for maintaining many of them.

30. **Initiate programs to promote student responsibility for safer schools.** Create a "student leader" group, representing leaders from all formal and informal campus groups. Work with this representative group as role models to assist and encourage school safety activities among their peers. Also, student government representatives can form a student safety committee to identify potential and present safety problems and their solutions.
31. **Encourage student input in district policy by appointing one or more student representatives to the school board.** These students would participate in discussions and planning but not as voting members.
32. **Create and publicize safety incentive programs.** These programs share a percentage of the district's savings with schools if vandalism is reduced. Such programs encourage students to take responsibility for vandalism prevention. Often students are allowed to help decide the projects on which the funds are spent.
33. **Coordinate student courts.** Student judges, lawyers, jurors, bailiffs and court clerks, trained by local justice system experts, hear and try cases involving fellow students. Student courts are not moot courts – they hear real cases, make real judgments and pass real sentences. Student courts give everyone a chance to learn first-hand about the court system, and they help teach students the importance of laws in a democracy.

34. **Establish local branches of student safety groups,** such as SADD (Students Against Driving Drunk) and "Arrive Alive" which sponsors alcohol-free social activities. Consider promoting student and parent groups that provide rides home to teen-agers who have been drinking.
35. **Conduct regular student attitude surveys and print the results in school bulletins.** Provide commentary on results and relevant policy. Clarify prejudices or misconceptions that may appear in the responses. Although ensuring anonymity promotes accurate survey answers, students should be encouraged to propose and take credit for submitting ideas.
36. **Make "idea boxes" for students available in libraries or other neutral locations.** Respond to all signed notes.
37. **Develop a student recognition process** which makes it convenient for teachers to report positive student actions to the administration for appropriate recognition in school and at home.
38. **Develop a "buddy system" for new students** which assigns current students to newcomers to facilitate an easy transition.
39. **Develop an informal system which assigns older, bigger students to look out for other students** who, for whatever reason, seem to be bullied by others.
40. **Institute a "Class Act" project** by which each incoming class plans a special project to be completed during the course of its years on campus. The project could be a special publication, a new school sign, special benches, landscaping, murals, monuments, a multimedia production or some other project the class presents to the school as its "legacy."
41. **Plan a community beautification campaign** for the school and neighborhood using students as a work crew. Graffiti and vandalized areas should be priorities. With professional guidance, students can help maintain campuses, parks and other community areas. Beautification projects serve the dual purpose of enhancing the appearance of the community and developing a strong sense of pride and ownership among participants.
42. **Develop a "Big Student-Little Student" program** between high schools, junior highs and elementary schools. Student participants regularly visit and share thoughts, concerns and advice with one another.
43. **Help students get noticed in the community** by arranging to display art, writing or other works in banks, libraries and various public facilities.
44. **Work with local colleges and universities to arrange faculty seminars and exchange visits by students.**

Working with parents

In *Discipline: A Parent's Guide* The National PTA identifies the key parental responsibility: Set a good example. Children learn more by how parents act than by what they say. The theme for most of these ideas is *get parents to make a commitment* to participate in the education of their children. Parent pride and involvement in the school sets a positive example for children.

45. **Make time for any parent who wants to meet with you.** Treat visiting parents as colleagues in the business of educating children. Always listen before you talk because often they just need to be heard. Try to conclude sessions with a commitment for support from parents.
46. **Encourage parents to communicate openly and regularly with their children about health and safety.** Also, urge parents to translate the negative effects of vandalism, theft, arson and other "impersonal" crimes into terms children can appreciate, such as "our" taxes and "your" special activity dollars going for repair costs.
47. **Establish a welcoming committee to greet new community residents.** Enlist parent volunteers to provide information, answer questions about school activities and encourage participation.
48. **Develop, revive or enhance parent-teacher group participation.** Be persistent in building membership. Plan interesting and useful activities and meetings, such as forums on effective parenting. Consider parent interests first, because whatever it takes to get parents involved in school activities is worthwhile. Fostering friendships between parents can have additional safety-related benefits because these friendships provide positive examples for children.
49. **Develop a parent-on-campus policy which makes it convenient and comfortable for parents to visit the school.** Get the program off the ground by inviting an initial group of participants who can spread the word.
50. **Call parents at home or even at work to congratulate them** on their child's special achievement or to thank them for support on a special project. Short letters of appreciation or thank-you notes also are very well received.
51. **Sponsor a "Generation Day" at school.** In addition to a special tour and presentation, consider arranging for a portrait photographer to take "multiple-generation" pictures.
52. **Organize parent phone banks.** Use the phone bank to solicit volunteers for special school projects, seek par-

ticipation at meetings or conduct attitude surveys.

53. **Distribute a curriculum calendar to parents.** Keep them informed about topics and courses currently taught or planned for the future.
54. **Initiate breakfast or lunch clubs for working parents.** Flexible meeting times should be used to accommodate working parents.
55. **Help establish a policy in which parents become financially liable for damage done by their children.** Parents and children need to be made aware of the serious consequences of criminal actions. (This already is state law in many parts of the country. In these areas the responsibility is to inform students and parents.)

Working with community residents

Just as communities work together to prevent crime with "Neighborhood Watch" programs, they can be mobilized to make schools safer and better. Because ideas for working with parents are addressed separately, these suggestions concentrate on community residents without school-aged children. They are designed to communicate to this critical group that they do have indirect, as well as direct, relationships to local schools.

Public opinion polls suggest the more people are involved in schools, the more likely they are to have a favorable opinion of them.

56. **Let the community share your concerns.** Hold a series of briefings for community residents to inform them of school problems directly affecting them. Property values are lowered when neighborhood schools have poor reputations and areas suffer from vandalism, crime by truants, drug trafficking and dropouts who end up dependent on public support. Solicit advice from community residents and conduct follow-up meetings to keep community representatives updated on progress. Residents also can be encouraged to hold "block coffees" for neighbors and school representatives.
57. **Form "School Watch" programs** in which neighbors around the school are asked to watch for and report suspicious activities in the area to school or law enforcement officials. Signs can be posted on the school grounds warning: "This school is protected by a neighborhood School Watch."
58. **Start a "Safe House" program,** which recruits responsible community residents willing to post "Safe House" signs in their windows. Children are taught that houses posting these signs are safe places to go if they are in danger or need assistance. Volunteers need to be closely screened before they are accepted and given a sign.

59. **Use outdoor posters or school marquees to announce school events** to area residents and invite their participation or attendance. Roadside signs declaring, "A community is known by the schools it keeps," have also been used to stimulate community partnerships.
60. **Recruit community residents, particularly retired teachers and senior citizens, to prepare school activity packets to distribute to new residents,** including those without school-aged children.
61. **Honor all school volunteers with a luncheon** and give special recognition to three or four people deemed particularly "outstanding" by school employees.
62. **Offer adult education classes on campus during regular school hours.** Courses can range from classes on crafts to income tax preparation. These classes are beneficial to community residents and integrate them into the school community.
63. **Take advantage of special events,** such as county fairs, shopping center promotions and local festivals, to set up school district information booths. Propose student participation in such events.
64. **Use school facilities to offer health clinics,** including CPR courses, blood pressure checks, nutrition breaks, exercise and aerobics classes. Encourage senior citizens to participate.

The largest growing special interest group in this country is the elderly. Although age is not a reason to deal differently with this group, they do have some special qualities and concerns. Time and experience are prized commodities in all public relations planning, and members of this group often are willing to supply them. The most important benefits of such contact, perhaps, is developing a mutual respect, appreciation and understanding between youth and senior citizens.

65. **Recruit senior citizens in your community to participate at local schools.** Arrange for seniors to make school presentations to history classes about public attitudes and "firsthand" experiences during significant times in our country's history. Small group discussions, chaired by senior volunteers, can be especially educational. Seniors also can participate as teacher or staff aides, student advisors and tutors, special activity organizers, playground supervisors and dance chaperones.
66. **Issue "Golden Apple Cards" to senior residents in the community who volunteer time on school projects.** The cards could allow seniors free or reduced price admission to school programs, such as musical concerts, plays and athletic events.

67. **Help integrate students and senior citizens by arranging for students to visit senior centers, convalescent centers or retirement homes.** Students can present plays and musical programs; home economic classes can prepare special meals; art classes can decorate the facilities; and engineering or shop classes can make small repairs. Younger children, particularly, can add a great deal of joy with regular visits to seniors. Some school groups may wish to participate in "adopt-a-grandparent" programs.

Working with service groups

Most communities have dozens of service, civic, religious and other special interest groups. Each organization's headquarters office or president's address should be included on the district magazine's mailing list. As you identify groups working in the public interest, try to match their interests with school district needs by developing programs centered around education. For example, a neighborhood association could work with students on a neighborhood clean-up or beautification project.

68. **Use school facilities and available resources to help youth groups.** Scouting organizations, Campfire troops, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, YMCA and YWCA, 4-H, Red Cross youth programs, and youth sports clubs are natural groups with strong ties to schools. Since these groups touch many families and often recieve support from influential non-parents, schools should make a special effort to develop continuing relationships. One approach is to establish an advisory council of representatives from all the groups to coordinate needs and resources and plan future joint ventures.
69. **Encourage participation of clergy in the development of citizenship education programs.** Character development, self-discipline and respect are appropriate topics for both sermons and classroom lectures. Consider organizing a representative group of parents, educators and religious leaders to develop a booklet which discusses these issues for students.
70. **Coordinate presentations to service groups by members of the school district speakers' bureau.** Arrange for student and staff speakers, providing regular updates on the specific topics and presenters available. Help speakers develop pre-packaged presentations which include a short slide show or videotape, school publications for distribution, background material on topics of special interest to specific audiences and a closing statement which encourages group members to work with the school.

71. **Use service group newsletters to inform members about special school programs.** Submit fillers, including student essays and art, to editors. Use these forums to encourage school volunteerism as part of their public service work.

Working with business leaders

The business community is a natural partner for local schools. Businesses have an immediate vested interest in good schools – quality education for the children of their employees. And they have a long range interest – a well-trained work force.

The quality of life and the quality of education in the community are inseparable, and business leaders understand this. These ideas are suggested to take advantage of this vested interest.

The term *business* is used to identify a profession or company generically, and it encompasses both management and labor. In fact, the logical place to start business partnerships is to meet with representatives from the local chamber of commerce and labor unions.

72. **Arrange regular presentations by business leaders to students, as well as teachers and parents.** Professional, practical advice is invaluable in understanding different professions and career opportunities. Coordinate career days at which business leaders participate in seminars, distribute information packets and present demonstrations.
73. **Promote "adopt-a-school" programs.** This trend in school-business partnerships unites a business with a school needing resources the business can supply. These business sponsors can donate equipment or excess supplies and "overage." They can provide company or staff services, such as bookkeeping, transportation, building repairs, maintenance, and professional instruction on computers or other new equipment.
74. **Involve business leaders in study or planning groups** to share with school districts their business problem solving techniques, such as personnel and finance management, resource allocation, building maintenance and marketing, public relations and advertising recommendations. Insights on how the private business sector solves problems can be enlightening and often cost-effective when implemented by schools.
75. **Coordinate field trips to business offices and production plants.** Witnessing the practical application of skills can make students more appreciative and understanding of classroom instruction.

76. **Develop a qualified student employment pool.** Work with business leaders to develop the criteria of a desirable employee. Closely screen applicants for the pool based on the qualifications requested by the prospective employer. Advertise the availability of this conscientious, willing work force to local businesses.
77. **Help realtors sell your schools.** Quality schools are a high priority with prospective home buyers. Work with real estate agents, brokers and boards to promote the positive qualities of your schools. Create a special task force to address problems, such as vandalized property, graffiti, loitering students, unkempt school grounds and even low test scores. General information and training seminars, which explain how real estate personnel can "sell" schools, can be added to regular office and real estate board meetings.
78. **Solicit support from local businesses patronized by students and their parents.** Work with them to develop a marketing strategy that provides discounts to students and parents and, at the same time, promotes their products or services. Book and record stores, clothing retailers, arts and crafts shops, sporting goods outfits and even gas stations can benefit from such promotions.
79. **Trade your district magazine advertising space for "in kind" services.** This often is a valuable "foot-in-the-door" with future major donors.
80. **Take advantage of lawyers' *pro bono* (free public service) responsibilities.** Lawyers can provide law-related in-service workshops for school employees on safety issues and trends. They can make class presentations which introduce students to the practical aspects of civil and criminal law, rights and responsibilities. Lawyers can assist in setting up "experiential learning" situations, in which students learn about the law through field trips to courthouses, city council meetings or the legislature. Many law firms around the country also are "adopting" schools. In fact, a New York based law firm developed the *Mentor* program to identify these lawyer/school partnerships.
81. **Team up with professional sports groups.** Some opportunities include student recognition days at the stadium and free or discount seats awarded for special student achievements. Professional athletes can be great role models. Arrange for them to visit campuses and talk about staying in school, rejecting drugs and alcohol, working hard and obeying the rules to be successful. Often professional team promoters will work with public institutions to produce public service announcements.
82. **Request special printing rates.** Develop an ongoing

relationship with one printer. Good customers may be rewarded with preferential treatment and occasional discounts. Sometimes printers will make available paper stock overage and slow press time at reduced rates or no cost. They also may allow you to "piggyback" your job (at no charge) on another press run. Offer to credit the company on your printed material. Commercial designers and typesetters occasionally will offer discount prices on their services.

Working with government representatives

Unanimous political support for quality education presents schools with a variety of opportunities. Many federal, state and local agencies and officials provide resources and services that can be helpful to schools. Identify the key government officials and political representatives in your area and add their names to your mailing list. At the same time, start a file on materials, resources and services they have to offer. Learn their primary interests in schools and explore means to effectively integrate them with your needs. If top policymakers are not easily accessible, request they assign a regular contact person to work with you.

83. **Establish a school district orientation plan for newly elected government representatives.** By initiating these relationships, you enhance opportunities for future access. Offer to compile data needed by government officials to support education proposals and provide lawmakers with the implications of particular legislation from a practitioner's point of view.
84. **Routinely invite your government representatives to school functions.** Provide them with the opportunity to address the gathering and always recognize them formally when they attend. Give elected representatives advance warning if the audience's attitudes may create conflict. As fellow public servants, although you may disagree with officials over policies, your professional courtesy will be appreciated.
85. **Have government officials sponsor student government days.** Consider teaming government representatives with students to propose solutions to real problems faced by students and schools, including drug abuse, dropouts, vandalism, personal safety, even fiscal and social problems.
86. **Use your influence to help other public interest groups.** The umbrella of quality education covers many related social causes that also will benefit schools. By helping other groups in their time of need, educators provide an important base for future school efforts. For

instance, many senior citizens are losing the battle against inflation. The benefits to senior citizens from schools and the dollars spent to fund them are abstract at best. As school enrollments decline, taxes increase and aid to senior citizens decreases, seniors could become very vocal opponents of increased school budgets. To mitigate this conflict, work with senior groups to pass legislation which provides them with whatever tax exemptions or government support is legally and financially possible.

87. **Sponsor public debates on controversial political issues.** Besides being informative, the debate format typically generates public interest. Invite state and local politicians and recognized experts to participate. Most policymakers appreciate the opportunity to make large group presentations. Notify the news media of your event.

Working with law enforcers

Law enforcement and schools need one another. Both groups represent highly trained professionals who have the welfare of the students and school community in mind. The respective roles of each must be clearly understood so they can work together effectively to deal with problems of mutual concern. Annual planning sessions and monthly briefings with law enforcement representatives, district administrators and school employees provide the opportunity to brief each other on safety issues and prevention and intervention strategies.

88. **Request a risk management or safety assessment audit of your schools by local law enforcement agency personnel.** This procedure will validate safety concerns and help establish response strategies.
89. **Establish an "Officer Friendly" program at local schools.** Invite local law enforcers to make presentations to students on child safety, drug abuse prevention and other juvenile justice practices and policies. Law enforcers visiting schools can demonstrate tools of their trade, including trained police dogs, breathalizers, first aid and emergency vehicles. The more comfortable students become in relating to law enforcers, the greater will be their appreciation for them and the laws they enforce. Similar programs also can be conducted at the school for community residents.
90. **Coordinate student and staff "ride-along" programs with officers on patrol.** This is an effective means for law enforcers to gain the respect and confidence of youth and school employees.
91. **Work with law enforcers and parents to fingerprint**

young children as a safety measure. Fingerprinting is usually done at a school site by law enforcers. The prints then are given to the parent or guardian.

92. **Pair law enforcers with high risk youths,** similar to the "Big Brother" program. Such relationships can be an important step in changing delinquent behavior patterns.

Working with the media

To augment readership and validate the information presented, schools must use existing mass media to complement their own communications tools.

Ninety-eight percent of America's households have televisions and an even higher percentage have radios. More than half of all Americans regularly read one or more of the over 3,000 general interest or trade magazines. There are 8,000 weekly newspapers and 1,700 dailies in America, and 120 have circulations over 100,000 and another 150 reach more than 50,000.

Tapping these existing channels of communication is perhaps the most efficient means of information dissemination. More importantly, the media are considered "independent," objective sources of information. Consequently, a school issue reported by the media is likely to have considerably more impact on public attitudes than the same message presented in the district magazine or delivered by the district administration.

The key to successful relations between the media and the school district is developing a working relationship which serves the other's goals. The media need to inform readers, and school districts need to provide quality education. Both are vital to a free society and both are considered the cornerstones of a democracy.

Members of the mass media guard their first amendment right of free press and zealously pursue their charge as protectors of the common citizen. Public relations practitioners, too, carefully maintain professional integrity. Information of public interest should be reported to and by the media. Public relations plans create newsworthy action and should not be construed as propaganda. With these goals understood and respected, the media can be an effective public relations ally.

It seems appropriate to add a final word of caution. Don't argue with those who "buy their ink by the barrel." If you believe information has been incorrectly reported or quoted, take a positive approach. Contact the publication or station and provide the corrected account. Often the media will update their report or offer a retraction. Even if this does not occur, the contact may make the reporters more careful with your material and promote accuracy in the future.

93. **Learn all you can about the media's needs,** operations, deadlines, services, and particularly the reporter and editor covering school news and receiving district news releases and advances. Know the deadlines and release stories so all or most of the media will get them at the same time.
94. **Encourage the media to support school events and issues.** Propose feature or documentary topics of potential viewer or reader interest that also promote schools. Extend an open invitation for media staff to visit the schools and learn about programs.
95. **Send public service announcements to the media.** Learn what public service directors want and submit announcements appropriate to their needs, including camera ready art for print media, 10-, 20- or 30-second spots for radio (submitted on paper or pre-recorded), or slides, copy or background information for television. Often TV and radio stations will work with local public service institutions to produce original announcements. Give this option serious consideration because when jointly produced, PSAs are virtually guaranteed regular placements and costs are reduced to little or nothing.
96. **Coordinate a forum for media representatives to meet with parents and other community residents at local schools.** Allow for question-answer time to constructively "reverse the roles" on the media representatives.
97. **Encourage media management to sponsor scholarships and special activities** to educate students about print and electronic media reporting and production.
98. **Solicit free or discounted copies of daily newspapers.** Encourage teachers to incorporate news coverage into English, civics and social studies courses.
99. **Become a resource for print media editors and broadcast news directors.** Provide the media with the roster of the district speakers' bureau. Anticipate news stories and suggest names of experts or interview possibilities immediately after learning of relevant current events.
100. **Coordinate field trips to newspaper printing plants and broadcast media production facilities** for school employees and students.
101. **Solicit media assistance in an annual evaluation of your public relations media effectiveness.** Request suggestions for improving your communications and news releases, as well as for specific new program ideas.

While considering these 101 ideas, it is important to remember two things. First, what works is good public relations. And

second, what does not work is not necessarily bad public relations. It's more like taking a swing and not hitting a home run. When the ball and bat finally do meet perfectly, that one home run can make all the other swings worthwhile. Baseball great Babe Ruth, remembered most for his 714 lifetime homers, hit a round tripper only once in every 11 times at bat and struck out 1,330 times in the process. Although good research will remove much of the risk from public relations planning, confidence and enthusiasm to "play the game" are required prerequisities for effective public relations.

APPENDIX A

"Principals of Leadership"

Principals play key leadership roles in developing school and community support for quality education. By employing the characteristics of strong leadership - vision, persuasion and commitment - principals and other administrators can effect constructive change in unproductive schools or enhance already positive school climates. In the process they also can build public confidence in the system.

A central conclusion of the National Institute of Education's *Violent Schools - Safe Schools* report in 1978 was "strong and effective governance, particularly by the principal, can help greatly in reducing school crime and misbehavior." A variety of education and government research supports this conclusion.

Because the principal has been identified as the catalyst to make schools safe and effective, the National School Safety Center and the National Association of Secondary School Principals annually present "Principals of Leadership," a print media, public service advertising campaign.

First presented during the 1985-86 school year, this campaign profiles those principals and other administrators in the United States who, as effective leaders, have created positive school climates.

Although American education today is generating leadership of notable quality at all levels, most of these leaders remain unrecognized. Further, their effective principles and practices have been isolated in the confines of their respective campuses.

This public service campaign, reprinted here in whole, recognizes these leaders' accomplishments with the hope they will serve as examples for other schools and, perhaps more importantly, stress the need for public support and involvement in American education.

To receive additional information on the campaign or to nominate a candidate, write: National School Safety Center, Pepperdine University, Malibu, California 90265.

PRINCIPALS of LEADERSHIP

Bronx Booster

"Students have got to see the principal as their advocate. Kids know that I like them as human beings. I'm a booster." *Patricia Black, Principal, Jane Addams Vocational High School, Bronx, New York*

The motto of Jane Addams Vocational High School is maximize the learning potential of every student – to raise their expectations, to provide new opportunities and to open doors to the future.

Nine years ago, Patricia Black came to Jane Addams V.H.S., located in the heart of the Bronx, in a community with one of the lowest economic bases of any congressional district in the country. As principal, Black took control of the difficult campus by developing a strong instructional program with clearly communicated goals and objectives.

"Hostility and aggression are part of growing up," says Black, "but this anxiety can be minimized and redirected through faculty guidance and peer group support and interaction." To facilitate this process, Black created the formal *Consultative Council*, which consists of students, parents and staff. Frequent breakfast meetings with students and staff also provide Black with needed informal feedback.

Community involvement plays a big role in Black's student education and socialization process. "The first step when I came to the Bronx was to make friends with the police precinct's community relations officer. He now regularly visits the school to explain his role in the community, in a very positive way, to my students.

"Preventive fire fighting, inculcating values of society into the educational process has given Jane Addams' students a renewed sense of pride in themselves and the community," says Black.

The State Department of Education agrees, calling Jane Addams "an outstanding example of a school that works. In an otherwise devastated neighborhood, it is an oasis where students and staff work together in an atmosphere that stresses mutual support and cooperation."

"This year my students and I will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Jane Addams," said Black. "I believe we have set a standard as a dynamic institution. The community and staff work together to provide these children with a safe, secure environment and an educational opportunity that will open doors to the future!"

For more insight from the Principals of Leadership, write: National School Safety Center, 7311 Greenhaven Drive, Sacramento, California 95831.

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PRINCIPALS of LEADERSHIP

No excuses.

"We think every kid can graduate. That is not to say we don't have problems – but there is not one educational problem we can't solve," *Reuben Trinidad, Principal, William C. Overfelt High School, San Jose, California*

It was the kind of school that pessimists like to point to as an example of all that's wrong with schools today – vandalism, graffiti, drug dealing and gang activity were not uncommon at the urban high school.

But major changes began in 1982 under the direction of Reuben Trinidad, the new principal of San Jose's William C. Overfelt High School. By 1984 the turnaround of the campus was so great it was selected by the U.S. Department of Justice as one of four "Outstanding Effective High Schools" in the nation.

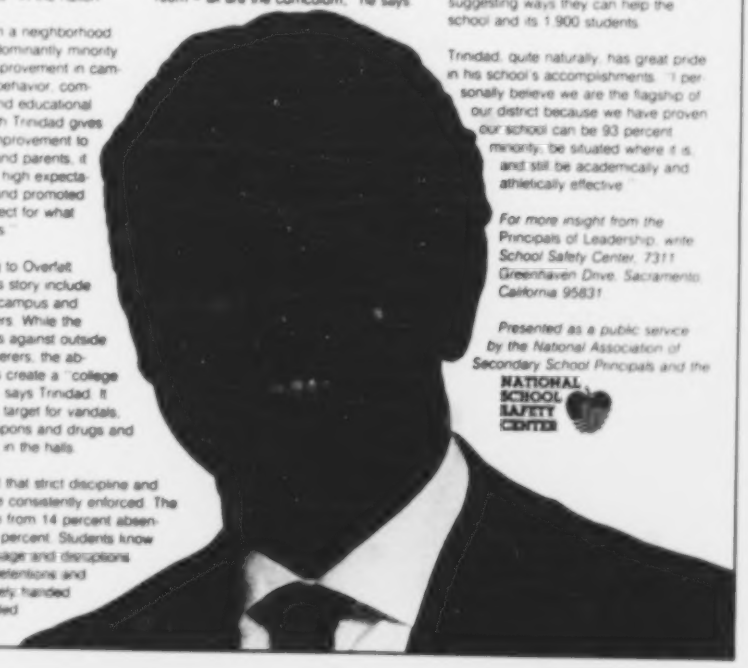
The school, located in a neighborhood of lower income, predominantly minority families, saw great improvement in campus climate, student behavior, community involvement and educational achievement. Although Trinidad gives the major credit for improvement to the faculty, students and parents, it is he who maintained high expectations for all students and promoted "self dignity and respect for what high school represents."

Strategies contributing to Overfelt High School's success story include establishing a closed campus and doing away with lockers. While the closed campus guards against outside troublemakers and loiterers, the absence of lockers helps create a "college campus atmosphere," says Trinidad. It also eliminates a main target for vandals, a hiding place for weapons and drugs and an excuse for loitering in the halls.

Trinidad also sees to it that strict discipline and attendance policies are consistently enforced. The result has been a drop from 14 percent absenteeism to less than 10 percent. Students know that fighting, foul language and disruptions will not be tolerated. Detentions and suspensions are routinely handed out and those suspended are expected to come back with completed homework.

Overfelt High School has also instituted a restitution policy for vandals. Students caught defacing or damaging school property know they will be required to repair the damage. Vandalism and theft have been reduced by more than half in the past three years, says Trinidad.

"A good principal will not separate a clean, safe, secure campus climate from what is taking place in the classroom – all are the curriculum," he says.



Parental involvement also plays a part in Overfelt's success. During the summer of 1983, a group of parents, students and teachers painted the entire 285,00-square-foot school and there has been no major vandalism or graffiti since then. "Strong parental involvement creates a special educational commitment which has positive effects in the classroom, on campus and in the community," says Trinidad, who spends one Saturday a month knocking on doors throughout the community asking what people want from the school and suggesting ways they can help the school and its 1,900 students.

Trinidad, quite naturally, has great pride in his school's accomplishments. "I personally believe we are the flagship of our district because we have proven our school can be 93 percent minority, be situated where it is, and still be academically and athletically effective."

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PRINCIPALS of LEADERSHIP

Double Troubleshooter

"It's important for schools to introduce students to role models. Successful community members from low income backgrounds are especially important because they help students understand their potential." *James C. Voyles, Jr., Principal, South High School, Columbus, Ohio.*

If at first you succeed, try again.

The Columbus, Ohio, school board wants Principal James C. Voyles, Jr. to try again. This time he is at the helm of South High, the largest school in the district. His ability to turn a school around is needed once more.

Voyles says of the assignment he began in the first days of 1986, "Only the school name is changing. The school problems are similar to ones I've faced before."

In 1983 Voyles was named principal of Starling Middle School, which did not enjoy the reputation of a safe place to learn. One student had been stabbed, several teachers had been assaulted and fist fights between students were commonplace. Graffiti blanketed the walls, and disciplinary actions consumed most of the administrator's time.

His transformation began with paint, landscaping and repairs to the 75-year old building. The physical changes reflected Voyles' commitment to a positive school image. But the improvements did not stop there. "We introduced a period at the beginning of the day to provide time for elective activities, offering things students requested - from breakdancing to weightlifting," explains the 17-year veteran in education. "The important thing to us is getting students involved and in school at the beginning of the day."

Last school year violent behavior at Starling was rare. School reports indicated about 600 disciplinary actions, down from about 2,500 two years earlier.

"It isn't hard to explain," says Voyles. "Students respond to positive reinforcement for good behavior." School halls, once covered with graffiti, now showcase student work. Noon dances, off-campus lunches and monthly drawings for donated prizes reward students for improved attendance and good behavior.

"One program I strongly believe in is bringing in successful community leaders, role models, to talk to students," Voyles states. "It helps young people understand the value of what they're doing in school today, where it can take them."

Voyles pays more than lip service to making the community partners in education. At Starling the local Kiwanis Club sponsors a student group that works on community and school service projects. The Ohio Bureau of Employment Service provides Starling students with employment counseling, tutoring, speakers and internships. A local United Way service agency also sponsors delinquency prevention programs and counseling for students and parents.

Although he prefers to downplay his troubleshooter reputation in the district, Voyles finds the assignments challenging. "My goal is to get the support of our students, staff and community and initiate positive programs that do what we're here to do - help kids."

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CARE PACKAGE

"You can choose to be involved and work with kids or you can choose to lock yourself in your office and work with papers. I choose to work with kids as much as I can." *Lynda Lewis, Principal, Sandalwood Junior-Senior High School, Jacksonville, Florida*

Lynda Lewis knows that we do, in fact, reap what we sow. As principal, her enthusiastic involvement in improving attitudes and the overall climate at Jacksonville's Sandalwood Junior-Senior High School has brought about a decrease in dropouts and national recognition to the campus as a model school.

Warmth, unity and caring attitudes have become the school's hallmarks — a remarkable task considering Sandalwood's large staff and 3,300-member student body.

In the three years that Lewis has been at Sandalwood, she has instituted several programs aimed at improving the school experience. These programs address students' academic and attendance problems, as well as their emotional problems and get teachers, students, parents, administrators and community members more involved with the school.

A unique, new program at Sandalwood is the "Children and Grief" project which is designed to help students understand and cope with grief resulting from loss. Lewis worked with Hospice of Northeast Florida in developing a bereavement program which offers counseling for students experiencing grief for reasons ranging from a death in the family or a family separation or divorce, to a disagreement with a close friend or even the death of a pet.

Lewis recognizes that "caring and having compassion" are vital in creating an effective and positive school climate.

The 18-year education veteran developed the Teacher-Guidance-Advisor Program (TGAP), which pairs faculty members with students who are experiencing academic, social and attendance problems. Lewis is herself an active participant in the program and works closely with several students.

Lewis credits TGAP and other Sandalwood programs for the school's declining dropout rate. In 1981-82, 5 percent of the student body dropped out compared to less than 1 percent last year.

Increased parent involvement is another source of pride for Lewis, who has seen the school's PTSA membership grow from 60 to more than 500 in the three years she has been at the helm at Sandalwood.

Attitude is important to Lewis, who encourages involvement and positive attitudes by getting as involved as possible in the various school activities and events. "I try to attend at least one event of every group at school, and that can be tough," says Lewis. "But teachers need to see administrators involved, and kids enjoy seeing us there too. The principal is the key instrument in schools noted for having a positive climate, a strong sense of pride and ownership and an environment that projects feelings of caring, learning and trust."

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PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP

No Bull

"When order and pride are firmly in place, then and only then, can the student and the school grow and flourish academically." *Joe Clark, Principal*
Eastside High School, Paterson, New Jersey

Violence, vandalism and fear were a part of life at Eastside High School before Joe Clark took over the helm of the New Jersey school in 1982. A crushing had occurred the first day of school the previous year. But the following fall the opening day of classes was the beginning of the school's transformation. Clark's plan to impose order had teachers, counselors and administrators standing in the middle of the halls urging students to walk to the right while security guards at the entrances of the building were checking those who entered.

Clark's experience as a former Army drill instructor is not wasted on Eastside students -- the sight of their principal roaming the halls armed with his bullhorn is a familiar one. Clark believes in being as visible and audible as possible throughout all parts of the building which houses 3,300 students.

During his first week as principal Clark expelled 300 students. He made it abundantly clear that he would not tolerate fighting, vandalism, drug possession, assaulting a teacher or profanity directed at teachers. He made all such incidents grounds for automatic suspension.

"If there is no discipline, no learning can take place," says Clark. "Without discipline there is anarchy. Good citizenship demands attention to responsibilities as well as rights."

When he began his second year as Eastside principal, Clark said there was no evidence of the "unbridled animals" he found when he first arrived at the school and last year Eastside was declared a model school by New Jersey's governor.

Clark says he was able to change a "blackboard jungle" into an institution of learning by establishing order, instilling pride and pursuing academic achievement. Efforts to promote pride include daily announcements extolling the accomplishments of productive Eastside students and condemning the behavior of those who have broken the rules. Assemblies are also held to honor students who have succeeded academically or who have shown leadership.

"The march toward excellence in education is endless," says Clark. "Every day students and staff have to be reminded of the need for order. Every day pride in self and school must be reinforced. Every day the value of academics must be demonstrated. Without these reminders the board of education, administration, staff and students could not have turned the tide at Eastside High School."

Clark says he knows critics call him a drill sergeant, but he says, "Discipline is only a means to an end. And that end is an improved education."

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Photo: George Pichaske

PRINCIPALS of LEADERSHIP

Great Expectations

"Students here take pride in knowing they are expected to act a little better than those in some of the neighboring schools." *Jim Perkin, Principal, Clackamas High School, Milwaukie, Oregon*

In high school Jim Perkin had an English teacher who demanded high quality work. "If it hadn't been for her, I might not have gone to college," recalls Perkin. "She had such high expectations, I found myself working hard to live up to them."

Perkin, principal of nationally commended Clackamas High School, believes high expectations are essential in education. "When only the best is accepted, students realize their teachers think them capable of excellence," he says.

This "expect-a-lot" philosophy sets the tone for Clackamas, a 1000-student high school in northwest Oregon. The school's high student achievement reflects the success of this policy. "Test scores are rising drastically," the enthusiastic administrator reports. "On a per student ratio, Clackamas had more National Merit Scholarship semifinalists than any other high school in the state. And our academic achievement test scores last year were well above the national norm." In addition theft and vandalism is down 50 percent from previous years and the absentee rate averages 4.8 percent, well below Oregon's average 8 percent rate.

Under Perkin's direction the school tightened its discipline policy and improved a computerized attendance system.

The staff participates in school decisions and planning. This year faculty goals aim for increased emphasis on academic studies, fewer classroom interruptions and greater recognition of student and staff academic excellence.

"A quality education is imperative, especially in this time of technological change," according to the former teacher, coach and counselor. "I agree with educator-author Jerome Bruner who said, 'If all students are helped to a full utilization of their intellectual powers, we will have a better chance of surviving as a democracy in an age of enormous technological and social complexity.'"

In 1984 Clackamas High was one of 200 schools in the nation cited for excellence and commendation by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Perkin admitted he was "delighted" by the school's recognition but not really surprised.

"At Clackamas High everyone is constantly reminded, 'You get what you expect. Expect a lot and you'll get it.'" Perkin's philosophy has been incorporated into a school motto: "Striving to be the best, expecting nothing less."

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PRINCIPALS/LEADERSHIP

We are Family

"Schools have the responsibility to shape values and set standards. The standards are peace, justice, non-violence, equity, compassion, love, community service, sharing." *George McKenna, Principal, George Washington Preparatory High School, Los Angeles, California.*

It wasn't too long ago that students were afraid to attend George Washington Preparatory High School in Los Angeles. It had a reputation for being a crime-infested campus where students fought with knives, sold drugs and assaulted teachers.

But in his six years as principal of the inner-city school, George McKenna has driven out the crime, violence, drugs and discipline problems, replacing them with strict rules of conduct, a high standard of expectations and a sense of family. McKenna instituted peer counseling programs and had buttons and posters printed with the message "We are Family," to remind the school's 2,700 students of their responsibility to one another.

His no-nonsense approach to bringing order to George Washington Prep includes a ban on personal radios, no earrings on males, no hair curlers on anyone and no gang symbols. All students must also sign a contract promising to complete daily homework assignments and to stop truancy and gambling on campus. Students breaking the rules have their parents summoned to school to discuss disciplinary action and possible expulsion.

McKenna's efforts have paid off. The annual number of suspensions has dropped from more than 600 to less than 100. While the average inner-city school has only a 70 percent daily attendance rate, Washington's is more than 90 percent. Vandalism, fighting, drug abuse and weapons possession have declined so dramatically that Washington and McKenna have been recognized nationally for an exemplary anti-violence/anti-truancy program.

McKenna says the school's transformation was done with the help of parents whom he recruits to serve as tutors and campus monitors. Parents in the restrooms have helped eliminate drug dealing and use on campus.

McKenna is especially proud of the school's academic turnaround. Washington, which is 90 percent black, is seeing nearly 80 percent of its graduates go on to college, while nationally about 27 percent of black high school graduates go to college, says McKenna.

Before any improvements can be made, "a principal must commit to excellence," says McKenna. "We must show we will not tolerate disrespect or violence. We have to set a higher standard of expectations."

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PRINCIPALS/LEADERSHIP

FUTURE STOCK

"The future of education is the future, and quality education should be the nation's top priority. Our youth is our most precious resource – they are the future and they belong to all of us." Emeral Crosby, Principal, Pershing High School, Detroit, Michigan

A sense of pride and positive self-image are important ingredients of a successful school. When these are missing, we are left with schools suffering from highly negative images. For Emeral Crosby, instilling a sense of school pride in students is an important step in improving education.

"Pride is important because it unites the school," says Crosby. "People feel good associating with winners." That philosophy extends to the rest of the community as well. Crosby believes in involving as much of the community as possible in the education system. "Community support is encouraging for students because it shows them that other people have an interest in them," says Crosby. "When students know people are willing to invest in them, it changes their attitude; it motivates them."

During his 15 years as principal of Detroit's Northern High School, Crosby began a motivational "Be Proud, Aloud" campaign to boost student morale. He also instituted a partnership with Michigan Bell in one of the first adopt-a-school programs in the country.

The school-business partnership had Bell employees serving as tutors and teaching assistants in remedial classes. They developed curricula, conducted mock job interviews with students and even planned public relations campaigns to build the image of the school, which is in the heart of Detroit in one of the poorest Congressional districts in the country.

At Pershing, Crosby now is working to increase community support while also promoting better attendance among both students and staff. Donations from members of the business community are funding a recognition program for students and staff with good attendance. "And we know that improved attendance is going to affect achievement," says Crosby. Community support also helped the school raise $26,000 for band uniforms last year. "We have a reciprocal relationship with the community. They do things for us and we do things for them," says Crosby, who adds, "Our band is called to perform more than any other in the city."

Crosby, who has been recognized as one of the country's most effective principals and served on the National Commission on Excellence in Education, is a firm believer in the back-to-basics philosophy and has worked to beef up math and science classes at both Northern and Pershing High School.

"Schools are our major institutions for training and preparing our youth for a productive role in our democracy," says Crosby. "The community should feel proud to have the school as part of the environment. Our schools are our number one line of defense. They must be safeguarded and supported."

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PRINCIPALS of LEADERSHIP

School Hows & Whys

"I think that most human beings are as good as they are because some unknown teacher cared enough to continue polishing until a shiny luster came shining through." *Marva Collins, Director/Teacher, Westside Preparatory School, Chicago, Illinois*

She's been called a "miracle worker" and a "superteacher," but what Marva Collins professes to be is an old-fashioned teacher who doesn't go in for any gimmicks in the classroom. Her educational philosophy is simply hard work, patience and concern for each individual child.

Marva Collins gained national acclaim when she literally went back to the old "one-room school" method of teaching by starting her own school in one of the rooms of her home.

The Westside Preparatory School was established in 1975 in response to strong concern on the part of Collins and other Chicago parents, that the needs of black students were not being properly addressed.

The private school, which started with a handful of students, now serves 244 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Collins proudly points out that her school has been able to nurture and teach students who had been written off in other school systems.

"Educated and caring Americans gave us our preeminence as a world leader, and only first rate education will save us from being labeled 'A Nation at Risk,'" says Collins.

"We must once again make schools miniature societies which teach students how to function in the real world. Violence will die unborn in our schools when we as parents and educators once again relight the flickering candles of excellence in America," says Collins, who has given her students reason to love the learning experience at her school. Self-discipline is stressed, but each child also is offered the "security of fairness, consistency, dedication, our respect and affection and the opportunity to learn constructive behavior through experience and guidance."

Collins attitude toward education is reflected in the creed she has her students recite daily, which includes: "I have the right to fail, but I do not have the right to take my teacher and other people with me. God made me the captain of only one life . . . my own."

As an educator, Collins has the power to make a difference. In her words, she has the power "to mold, to nurture, to hold, to hug, to love, to cajole, to praise and yet to criticize, to point out pathways . . . to become a part of another person's being."

"I may not be mentioned in Fortune magazine as one of the wealthiest women in America," says Collins, "but my wealth cannot be measured on a balance sheet."

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PRINCIPALS of LEADERSHIP

TEAM SPIRIT

"I believe in management by wandering around. I try to be as visible as possible. I want to show kids that I care. . . . They really respond to it and I love doing it." *Robert Maher, Assistant Principal, Lakeland High School, Shrub Oak, New York*

Vandalism, low morale and general apathy were prevalent at Lakeland High School when Robert Maher decided that he and a group of students could and would combat the problems facing the suburban campus in Shrub Oak, New York. The result was a student leadership program that has been going strong for six years and has prompted interest from other schools throughout the nation.

Maher felt that getting students involved was the best approach. The leadership program's goals being for each student are to better himself, better the school, and better the community.

"We try to involve a lot of kids, including those who aren't usually 'involved' – we try to turn them on to school," says Maher. The program features student participation in projects that range from reducing vandalism and ending loitering in restrooms to developing school bulletin boards. Participants also volunteer many hours of their free time to community organizations.

"Leadership means different things to people – power, prestige, honor or personal advantage. Real leadership, however, begins with service to others," says Maher, who believes that in addition to academic studies, schools must educate students in social responsibility.

Lakeland's "Beautification Program" is another project developed by Maher. It combats school vandalism and improves school climate, while also serving in a disciplinary capacity. Students caught defacing school property, smoking in unauthorized areas, leaving school without permission or engaging in other such undesirable activities, either will be assigned to the in-school suspension program or can volunteer their time to the "Beautification Program."

"We try to match students up with their crimes: so if kids are throwing food in the cafeteria, then they are assigned to wash the cafeteria floors and tables. If kids are smoking in unauthorized areas, they get to pick up thousands of cigarette butts," explains Maher. "The spirit this program builds is tremendous," says Maher. "A kid will see someone marking up a building and he'll say 'Hey, don't do that, I just painted that wall!'"

Maher's emphasis on getting students involved with their school in the tradition of that old team spirit may hail from his days as a college athlete. In his senior year at State University of New York at Plattsburgh, the NCAA recognized Maher as one of the "Outstanding College Athletes of America," based on his performance in his studies and as a baseball and basketball standout. These days Maher's pride is based on the part that he's played in making a difference in the lives of students.

Maher's commitment to teaching students more than reading, writing and math skills is evident in the various programs he has established at Lakeland in the seven years he has been there as a teacher and an administrator. Among these is the mock trial competition which was developed with the cooperation and sponsorship of the New York State Bar Association.

Lakeland's leadership project and various other programs serve to train students for life, says Maher, and that's what schools are all about. "We must teach students to solve problems and become citizens capable of facing the larger problems of society."

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APPENDIX B

Resources

School safety:

National School Safety Center
Pepperdine University
Malibu, California 90265

NSSC resources include: *School Safety*, a newsjournal published three times a year; *School Crime & Violence: Victims' Rights*, *School Safety Legal Anthology*, *School Discipline Notebook* and *The Right to Safe Schools*. *NSSC Resource Paper* topics include: *Safe Schools Overview*, *Drug Traffic & Abuse Prevention*, *Increasing Student Attendance* and *Student and Staff Victimization*. "What's Wrong With This Picture?," a school safety docudrama, is available in VHS and Beta tapes and 16mm film formats. NSSC also sponsors "America's Safe Schools Week" (third week of October, annually), "Principals of Leadership" and the U.S. Apple Corps, a student crime prevention and citizenship program. (Contact NSSC for prices and ordering information on all materials.)

National Alliance for Safe Schools
501 North Interregional
Austin, Texas 78702

U.S. Department of Education
School Discipline Working Group
Office of the Undersecretary
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Crime Prevention Coalition
733 15th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

National Crime Prevention Institute
Shelby Campus
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky 40292

National Child Safety Council
Post Office Box 1368
Jackson, Michigan 49204

National School Boards Association
1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
NSBA resource: *Toward Better and Safer Schools*

National Institute on Drug Abuse
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD)
Post Office Box 800
Marlboro, Massachusetts 01752

The National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention
666 Fifth Street, 13th Floor
New York, New York 10103

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1835 K Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20006

SAFE POLICY
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
U.S. Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20531

Law-Related Education (LRE)
National Training and Dissemination Program
605 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

American Institute for Character Education
Post Office Box 12617
San Antonio, Texas 78212-0617

School public relations:

National School Public Relations Association
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201
Arlington, Virginia 22209

NSPRA resources include: *School Public Relations, Basic PR School Kit, Board Members/Superintendents PR Survival Packet, Evaluating Your School PR Investment, Keys to Community Involvement, Learn From The Winners, It Starts in the Classroom* and *Education USA* (newsletters), and numerous other specialized packets and kits. NSPRA also has available the first electronic education-related network, ED-LINE.

Council for Advancement and Support of Education
11 Dupont Circle, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

CASE resources include: *How to Make Big Improvements in the Small PR Shop, Marketing Higher Education: A Practical Guide, Institutional Image: How to Define, Improve, Market It, Improving Internal Communication, Effective Community Relations* and *Evaluating Your PR Program.*

The National PTA
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2571

American Federation of Teachers
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

National Education Association
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091-1598

National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Public relations:

International Association of Business Communicators
870 Market Street, Suite 940
San Francisco, California 94102

Public Relations Society of America
845 Third Avenue, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10022

Recommended books:

Public Relations, Edward L. Bernays: University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1952.

The Engineering of Consent, Edward L. Bernays: University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1955.

Crystallizing Public Opinion, Edward L. Bernays: Liveright, New York, New York, 1923.

Public Relations Strategies and Tactics, Dennis L. Wilcox, Phillip H. Ault and Warren K. Agee: Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, New York, 1986.

Lesly's Public Relations Handbook, Philip Lesly: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1983.

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